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ABSTRACT

A project was conducted in Australia to put together guidelines for developing gender-inclusive, ethnic-inclusive, and nonagist material in adult literacy curricula. Another purpose was to develop examples of adult literacy curricula exemplary in the use of nonsexist, nonagist, and nonracist material. This document combines the executive summary with the full report. The development of inclusive adult literacy, language,, and numeracy curricula is examined. The report looks critically at the following: key theoretical issues, policy-making procedures, strategies for policy implementation (current good practice and the necessary steps to extend this good practice to an inclusive curriculum), and resources (16 books and journals are reviewed and summarized). Contains 101 references. (KC)

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Positively different:

guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula

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Department of Employment, Education, and Training, Canberra, 1993

Positively different:

guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

by
Sue Shore
Adeline Black
Anne Simpson
Melanie Coombe

published by
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INTRODUCTION

This project has formed part of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy 1991/92 Adult Literacy National Projects sponsored by the Department of Employment, Education, and Training. It has two broad aims:

- to put together guidelines for developing gender-inclusive, ethnic-inclusive, and non-ageist material in adult literacy curricula
- to develop examples of adult literacy curricula exemplary in the use of non-sexist, non-ageist, and non-racist material.

The clients of the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field are those people for whom inclusive curriculum aims to provide equal opportunity through equal access: Aborigines, non–English speaking background learners, women, people with disabilities, and more recently, the aged, and young unemployed. Adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, however, have largely failed to affect social injustices. Although inclusivity currently aims to give all participants the skills to take part in society, it has limited impact to change many of these social injustices. This aspect of change must be taken into account in any future inclusive curriculum development.

OUTCOMES

The main product of the project is a report, *Positively different: guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula.* The document examines critically the following:

- key theoretical issues
- policy-making procedures
- strategies for policy implementation—current good practice and the necessary steps to extend this good practice to an inclusive curriculum
- resources.

The conclusion raises the implications of our approach for future directions in inclusive curriculum development for social justice purposes.

This summary is intended to encapsulate the key points of the main document.

CURRICULUM THAT CATERS FOR DIFFERENCE

Education for social justice

The main theme of the document is the need for education *for* social justice (Reid 1992). This requires explicit recognition that *all* groups in our society have 'culture' or 'ethnicity'. For example, what is significant about white, Anglo-Saxon, masculine culture is its taken-for-granted position as the dominant, valued culture, which obscures its very ethnicity.

Education *for* social justice also requires explicit recognition that curriculum development involves selections of knowledge and methods, which are not random or neutral due to the structure of society in which they occur. Inclusive curricula for social justice must identify the choices that have been made, what drives the selection of these choices, and the potential for other kinds of choices to be part of the curriculum process.

Curriculum for empowerment

In accordance with this theme, inclusive curriculum gives disadvantaged groups a space to speak, to be heard, and to have their concerns and needs honoured. Inclusive curriculum, then, involves increasing participants' awareness about fundamental rights, empowering action, and assisting learners to enhance their possibilities to determine actively how they make and act on choices, and to understand the possible consequences of their choices and actions.

Difference as positive

In order to achieve this empowerment, a positive politics of difference needs to permeate all levels of the education system (and, indeed, society). Difference is currently constructed in our society so as to marginalise many people. If difference is conceived as positive rather than deviant in the education system, all participants (learners, educators, and managers) can be encouraged to challenge the hierarchy of culture that exists in our society in order to co-create a more equitable and socially just future for all.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INCLUSIVE CURRICULA BASED ON A POSITIVE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

In this project, curriculum has been viewed as all the practices that have an influence on learning. Guidance must therefore acknowledge both the classroom and broader systemic decisions that impact on learning.

Inclusive curricula based on a positive understanding of difference must do the following:

- acknowledge that all individuals bring multiple perspectives to any learning situation as a result of their gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, and/or physical abilities
- recognise that since identification with social groups is multiple and complex, claimed identity will be in response to many contextual factors that position the individual politically
- reflect the experiences of learners, both as individuals and as members of particular social groups and value these experiences through their use as the basis of learning and assessment.

This will entail:

- examining critically the process of constructing social groups
- acknowledging the processes by which conventional educational knowledge is constructed and loaded to maintain and enhance a position in social interaction generally dominated by white, Anglo-Saxon, middle class, able-bodied males
- identifying where, how, and why conventional knowledge has systematically excluded the achievements, contributions, and experiences of various groups
- developing policies that do not 'presume as the norm capacities, values, and cognitive and behavioural styles typical of dominant groups thus disadvantaging others' (Young 1990, 173).

Systemic responsibility

The project stresses the importance of the role of the system to support inclusive measures and practices. Systemic responsibilities include what happens both at the classroom and institutional levels and extends to all participants in the educational system. All participants in the system—educators, learners, managers, administrators, and support staff—need to be informed about that role and need to be explicitly encouraged and supported to ensure inclusive provision. The guidance aims to build on existing good practice and to extend it beyond classroom interaction.

Management, policies, and strategies will need to re-examine the relations of power that shape provision. This is essential if adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula are to go beyond the assimilationist approach that underlies much current educational provision to an approach that celebrates difference and challenges the status quo in order to achieve greater equity in participation and social justice.

GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

The process of developing inclusive curriculum will need to foreground the educator-learner interface *and* institutional practices that influence adult literacy, language, and numeracy education *for* social justice. This will involve greater collaboration and exchange between those who conceive curriculum and those who participate in it.

The development process of inclusive curricula must therefore ensure these aspects:

- its association with the teaching/learning setting
- the flexibility and responsiveness of consultation in curriculum development, especially in relation to those client groups that the curriculum claims to serve
- a responsive relationship between planning, implementation, and review
- that hierarchies of power and difference are not perpetuated in organisational structures and curriculum development.

Creating the curriculum

For inclusive purposes, this will include examining the following:

- how adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs are integrated into the overall mission of an institution or system
- the procedures by which decisions affecting adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs are made
- the extent to which an administration supports the program
- how course priorities are identified
- how students are selected for courses and the criteria guiding selection
- the extent to which assessment and reporting mechanisms enhance further participation.

How the players interact

The inclusive curriculum strives to balance the discrimination, exploitation, and marginalisation of daily life with an educational environment that provides time and space to examine, understand, and plan action to counter inequality. In essence, inclusive classroom practices:

- explicitly examine and positively exploit differences between members of the learning group

- recognise that individual power relations exist between members of the group as individual personalities and as members of social groups
- give each person a position from which to speak while not privileging individual views above those of others
- do not accept behaviour or language that oppresses or stereotypes group members
- examine individual power relations between learners in the context of wider social relations
- are explicit about educational and social change as a purpose of classroom learning
- do not offer false promises about the potential magnitude of individual or social change.

As well as their central role in inclusive learning, teachers have a role in informing their managers about the adequacy with which institutional arrangements enable them to address learning needs.

Institutions and systems are clearly responsible for the overarching framework within which inclusive teachers' practices operate in a number of ways:

- by providing information on how decisions are made within the context of the institution, its structure, and its mission
- by adopting strategies within the decision-making process to review manager and educator assumptions that underlie procedures and decisions
- by examining how procedures might silence particular voices during the decision-making process
- by making procedures and structures accessible to people participating in debate
- by being explicit about how structures assist this
- within the bureaucratic structure, by identifying people and positions that are actually accountable for the degree to which decision-making procedures are successful in addressing community needs.

A broad view of curriculum and the social nature of literacy learning requires that systems take on board the minutiae of provision that actually influence whether anyone turns up for class.

Valuing knowledge: making selections from 'the' culture

Commonly, adult literacy, language, and numeracy learners are individuals who are outside the 'taken-for-granted' culture and who are therefore disadvantaged by the very society in which they are being asked to

participate. Further, where content and learning resources are individualistically conceived, the realities of groups, difference, and oppression are disguised. The content of adult literacy, language, and numeracy teaching must represent individual experience and understanding and explore how these understandings are conservatively produced and reinforced through the law, media, history, as well as though health, education, and welfare services. An inclusive curriculum *for* social justice purposes does not simply reinforce prevailing norms.

Assessment

Currently, learners have limited autonomy over which achievements are valued and measured, how that measurement takes place, and for what purposes the assessment results are used. The challenge in adult literacy, language and numeracy curricula is to develop and sustain assessment procedures that do not systematically assess as deficit those outside the dominant culture.

Most important to the assessment procedure is recognition that 'marking' and measuring are done against standards. In an inclusive system, these standards are revealed to learners and teachers, as well as to employers and other providers who may be unaware of the ways in which they unwittingly exclude or marginalise individual potential and thereby reduce the gains to individuals and organisations.

Resources

Many existing resources reflect superficial understandings of cultural difference and social groups. A skilled educator will use these resources to explore the cultural assumptions, beliefs, and values embedded in them. Careful questioning can help the class lay bare what has been foregrounded in the text and what is absent.

Program management will need to create professional development opportunities that enable teachers and librarians to select resources that critically examine ideas, beliefs, and practices embedded in text and that are representative of different positions nd perspectives. Professional development opportunities are also essential to enable teachers to be involved in writing resources that challenge dominant discourse about social groups or conventional literacy practices and examine the assumptions inherent in making particular resource selections. In inclusive institutions, resource development will go hand-in-hand with trialling and the necessary professional development to extend classroom uses of the resource to meet the changing needs of learning contexts.

Training and development

The training needs of educators, managers, bureaucrats, and support staff are central to inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy practice *for* social justice within a model of provision that acknowledges that curriculum encompasses all the activities that influence student learning. In an inclusive system, all employees need to recognise the significance of their values and attitudes in relation to successful adult literacy, language, and numeracy participation.

Professional development programs for educators will do these things:

- engender a climate of reflective teaching that allows teachers to examine their own practice without fear of sanction
- engage teachers with the theoretical issues shaping their practice
- provide action research opportunities for teachers to transform these issues into effective teaching and learning strategies
- acknowledge the constraints operating on teachers, who are already stretched beyond capacity in a field that is rapidly developing a top-down management structure.

Training programs for all workers in a socially just institution will aim for the following:

- improving employees' abilities to participate in decision-making processes
- informing and supporting their commitment to the equal opportunity principles outlined in organisational employment conditions
- informing employees of inclusive practices
- increasing awareness of sanctions against behaviour that contravene inclusive practice for social justice
- offering cultural awareness programs and experiential training in interacting with colleagues
- teaching people how to operate on committees where they represent their own opinions, or alternatively, where they are elected as channels to reflect the voices of particular social groups
- teaching employees how to introduce ideas positioned outside the prevailing discourse.

CONCLUSIONS

The guidance from this project has three implications.

First there must be willingness on the part of all those involved in provision to reconsider how relations of power in the structure of society shape provision.

Second, a commitment is needed within institutions to reconceptualise how policy will be based on a positive approach to difference. This will require managers, learners, and educators to make decisions and coordinate their work in new ways.

Third, this process will require participants to have the courage to work outside prevailing dominant 'norms'. To challenge the dominant 'norms' means challenging our own role in perpetuating what is oppressive and unjust in existing adult literacy, language, and numeracy practices. This may require that those of us in advantaged positions may have to relinquish our hold on the curriculum—what we value, what we select, and what we assume is important for learners to know.

These implications go beyond simple budgetary increases and an enhanced administrative infrastructure. Funding increases are desirable, but existing patterns of distribution will only perpetuate educational inequalities and serve to advantage privileged groups further. In order to realise educational claims *for* social justice, the practical aspects of provision must be reconsidered in the light of a positive politics of difference. Unless systems are very clear about addressing the relations of power embedded in the policy process and educational practice, progress towards social justice will be hampered by curriculum activity that obscures the oppressive nature of bureaucracies that treat difference as deviance.

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Positively different:

guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula

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Anne Simpson
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- the students and teachers who gave up precious class time so that we could hear their views first-hand
- all our colleagues and friends who, in a variety of ways, challenged our thinking, interrogated our ideas, and presented us with new perspectives on the debate.

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PREFACE

From the outset of this project we knew that the issues that we would be dealing with were complex, and challenging. We found this exciting and we were optimistic about the scope of the project, since the team shared common aspirations. A plan was devised that would allow many voices to be heard and that would provide organised progress in the process.

We were aware that the consequences of our cultural baggage and values might result in blind spots and limit our perspectives. As a team we represented a very specific cultural identity: professional, white women from distinctly middle class, Anglo backgrounds, with working class roots left some years behind. Particular ideologies such as feminism were shared, which enabled us to take a critical perspective. Our reference group, critical friends, and a wide range of practitioners and literacy administrators also ensured that our assumptions did not go unchallenged.

Our awareness of our similarities left us unprepared for our first major surprise of the project—our differences. Throughout the project, we wrestled with the challenge of our own distinct but overlapping approaches to theory and practice. This became a strength of the project and meant that our assumptions as individuals within the team were open to debate. These differences and the critical sharing of our perspectives, however, enhanced our understandings of group identification and difference that influence this document.

We were informed in a much wider way than we anticipated by the consultations and workshops we had with learners and educators within and beyond the literacy, language, and numeracy field. The literature we read contributed our ideas and debate, and became a large part of the project's process, fundamental to its progress.

One decision that strongly influenced our structure is our conviction that issues, debates, and theory inform practice, and that practice in turn helps to refine theory. In addition, we believe theory is not the exclusive province of academics and researchers; it is a central aspect of the way teachers make sense of their practice. The theoretical issues are therefore placed at the forefront of this document because we believe that the guidance we offer is then understood in terms of the particular positions that we have taken on literacy, curriculum, and social justice.

Another decision we made was to provide 'guidance' to the field and not 'guidelines'. We have sought to avoid checklists and the imperatives of

'dos' and 'don'ts'. The document is instead a process that invites the reader to engage in, to challenge, and to refine the theory-practice intersection of curriculum and social justice issues. This approach is consistent with our belief that literacy, language, and numeracy learning is interactive and that parallel staff development activities are most useful if they encourage educators and learners to construct their own theories of social reality.

Lastly, we offer this guidance to two distinct audiences: literacy educators and persons responsible for developing and sustaining inclusive adult literacy, language, and learning curriculum in provider institutions. It is tempting because of the importance of the teacher-learner interface to say that the classroom is where change must occur. We believe that this is simplistic and is in danger of positioning educators as solely responsible for the hard work of social change through literacy, language, and numeracy learning. For change to occur in any consistent and lasting way, teachers must be challenged and supported by the systems in which their classrooms exist. The process that we present in our guidance indicates that responsibility and decisions must be made at both the classroom and institutional levels.

In the end, the process represented in this document is incomplete. We are aware that the debates we present are limited by our own assumptions about culture, groups, difference, social justice, and related teaching and learning practices and should therefore be challenged. We encourage you to read for what is missing, the issues that we have not named or that are inadequately dealt with, and the voices we have omitted. That this should happen is consistent with the spirit of the project.

INTRODUCTION

Education in western societies has been presented historically as a fundamental building block of democracy. It has been charged with equipping the community to participate fully in the responsibilities and benefits of that democracy. The education system is intended to meet the needs of all and is expected to be a social equaliser. By providing equal access to skills and knowledge, it is felt that education can provide equal opportunity for all citizens to participate in social life.

The adult literacy, language, and numeracy field has had as its clients by and large those people who remind us that equal access to education is not enough. They are often the very people for whom inclusive curriculum aims to provide equal opportunity. Meeting the needs of indigenous people, non–English-speaking-background learners, women, people with disabilities, and, more recently, the aged, and young unemployed is fundamental for adult literacy, language, and numeracy teachers.

While adult literacy, language, and numeracy education is not the only system to deal with 'victims' and 'problems' of poverty and oppression, it is definitely one agency expected to provide a 'cure'. In the last decade Australian unemployment figures have grown, and adult literacy, language, and numeracy education has been under increased pressure to provide a solution for social ills.

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy have not provided the desired cures and solutions any more than early education has prevented oppression and poverty. Adult literacy, language, and numeracy, in spite of attempts to be inclusive, have to a large extent failed to have an impact on social justices. This is partly because inclusivity as it has usually been conceived has aimed to give all participants the skills to take part in society but not necessarily to challenge or change it.

This project has explored inclusivity differently. We have taken a position that inclusivity in adult literacy, language, and numeracy education can only be achieved comprehensively if educators and learners are involved in challenging and interrogating the status quo. We assert that adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning should be a vehicle for examining how society positions people and how differences are perceived and treated by social institutions. This means going beyond socially just teaching to educating for social justice.

The focus of this project is adult literacy, language, and numeracy education's role in creating a socially just society. We recognise the difficulties this poses and acknowledge that no one system can achieve this on its own. There are some layers of policies, attitudes, and institutions that affect adult literacy, language, and numeracy classrooms and learners that we cannot reach, but because adult literacy, language, and numeracy are, we believe, social processes, their role in social change should not be ignored.

Equally complex and difficult is defining what a socially just society might look like. In order to examine this process for moving towards a socially just society and to consider how guidance could be offered to a particular education field, we collected information from two main sources:

- interviews and discussions with adult literacy, language, and numeracy educators and learners
- a search of the literature for what researchers and writers could tell us about curriculum, difference, inclusivity, social justice, and how these impact on adult literacy, language, and numeracy.

This exploration was interactive. When interviews with adult literacy, language, and numeracy learners revealed issues, we then searched the literature for writers who could take our thinking forward. We turned to practioners to help us define a potential model for making sense of the issues raised in discussions, and new discussions often led us back to the literature to reveal new perspectives on old issues. Chapter one, 'Theory informing inclusive curriculum' reveals what we discovered and lays the foundation for chapters two and three, which focus on policy and guidance to practitioners and administrators.

We believe chapter one provides important background material for the reader who wants to interact with the issues that we encountered along the way. Other chapters in the document evolve from our understandings of the issues we researched and the debates into which we entered. While readers may wish to read the policy and guidance chapters first, we think that theory and practice inform and evolve from each other, which accounts for the document's structure.

Chapters two and three of the document contain guidance for teachers and administrators. We look critically at policy-making processes and strategies for policy implementation that guide the process of change. We then consider how policy may be enacted in classrooms and institutions. We consider current good practice and discuss the action necessary to take this existing good practice further towards an inclusive curriculum.

Chapter four considers resources and how they can be critically analysed and used to inform teaching and administration of adult literacy, language,

and numeracy programs. This examination is not exhaustive. We have looked at a range of resources and modelled an approach that assists teachers in selecting and using resources in inclusive ways.

The final section of this document contains our conclusions and suggestions for future directions implicated from our approach. This section does not stand on its own. Rather, it is an epilogue to the process and debates presented in the document.

Ultimately, the reader must decide how to approach this document. We offer it as an invitation to join the debate or present alternative perspectives.

CHAPTER 1: THEORY INFORMING INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

We took as a starting point the idea that an inclusive curriculum was only one aspect of a socially just education system. For the purposes of this project, inclusive curriculum is discussed in terms of all the institutional practices affecting learners' experiences once they have enrolled in an adult literacy, language, or numeracy course. An inclusive curriculum achieves the following:

- it actively engages learners in learning that is relevant to past experiences and future needs
- it reflects the similarities and differences found within and between social groups
- it acknowledges the historical and political nature of these points of similarity and difference
- it recognises that the curriculum is a potential site for initiating changes that enhance learners' social and vocational prospects while increasing their awareness of factors constraining their capabilities.

This last point underscores the role of curriculum in *education for social justice* (Reid 1992). Throughout this document, we emphasise that this notion of inclusive curriculum for social justice has a significant impact on the type of guidance that we offer to systems and practitioners intent on inclusive curriculum development.

The critical approach taken in this project has been significantly influenced by our belief that social justice is a concept often founded on flawed ideas about social groups and difference. Theories of social justice often incorrectly equate relational qualities such as rights, opportunities, power, and self-respect with commodities like wealth and material resources (Young 1990). A critical review of these theories indicates a need for fairly significant shifts in current thinking about social justice and the means by which institutions, educators, and learners might engage in inclusive curriculum processes aimed at generating socially just practices.

The first part of this chapter expands on understandings of social justice and the context of adult literacy provision. We discuss ideas about social groups and difference, social justice as a relational concept, a 'family' of concepts that describe various forms of oppression, and the ways in which

these issues influence the processes of development of, and principles underpinning, inclusive curricula. The second part of this chapter explores more fully the implications for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision as well as definitions of 'literacy' and language, and understandings of curricula.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CONTEXT OF ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND NUMERACY EDUCATION

Reid (1992) notes that, historically, initial schooling has adopted at least two approaches to social justice. Some programs inform generally about social justice issues and the inequitable treatment that many individuals and groups experience in society. Other programs promote various course arrangements and teaching practices that ensure greater participation and involvement by particular groups in education systems.

The former are usually identified with redressing historical practices in education that have marginalised, ignored, or silenced group experience, and which are identified as programs offering *education about social justice*. Supposed Aboriginal acquiescence to European invasion of Australia (Reynolds 1982) is one example. Many education programs seek to inform the wider Australian population of alternative perspectives on Australian Aborigines and their place in the history of European invasion.

A second approach to social justice encourages practices within an educational system attempting to 'alter the balance of resource provision in favour of the "disadvantaged" ' (Reid 1992). Such programs ensure *social justice in education*. Attempts to develop inclusive curriculum are an example of how social justice in education might be achieved.

Social justice practices in education are not, however, without problems. Within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, inclusive practices are most commonly associated with individual tuition, joint collaboration between educators and learners, and learner-centred programs. These practices are believed to offer learners opportunities to increase their control over learning processes that have traditionally not been open to their input and guidance. Like Keddie (1980), however, we suggest that the individual focus of much adult education provision draws attention away from wider social factors that shape the particular educational needs of learners. In adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs in particular, this focus reinforces the notion that individuals are largely responsible for the difficulties they experience. This obscures other factors leading to adult literacy, language, and numeracy difficulties that might be related to any number of things:

- inadequate educational resources
- structurally inadequate educational arrangements at the school or at post-secondary level
- limited schooling because of poverty or because of dissonance between family and school values
- barriers to language learning because of persistent demands on adults to maintain their employment status, study patterns, and necessary levels of family care
- relations of power between educators and learners that limit the ability of learners to influence educational processes.

An emphasis on meeting individual needs has obscured one explicit purpose of adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, which is to overcome many of the unequal outcomes of initial schooling that appear to be systematically reproduced within particular social groups. Rather, inclusive practices have been used as a form of educational humanism that ensures that an individual's needs are met to enable more effective participation in social interaction. This tension between meeting individual and group needs is apparent where:

> [a]dult educators face daily the disjunction between individual and group needs, and they often act as arbiters: cutting short the remarks of a dominant and verbose participant or defending the rights of an individual against a group decision (Tennant 1985, 10).

The potential disjunction between the needs of the individual and the group and how educators and institutions respond to these needs is a central thread through the guidance offered by this project.

The individual focus in many programs also obscures how individuals' needs might be reframed or even revised by educators, coordinators, or administrators of programs attempting to accommodate changing priorities within the institution and the particular constraints of funding requirements. In the 1970s and '80s, literacy provision specifically offered a 'second chance' to individuals who, for one reason or another, had not acquired the basic skills necessary to access further personal or vocational development. In the 1980s and '90s, the 'second chance' has been replaced by a concept of 'lifelong learning', which shifts the educational focus away from deficits emerging from initial schooling experiences to new learning opportunities emerging from demands made on adults as they mature. In the 1990s in particular, new learning opportunities are closely associated with vocational outcomes. Thus, while 'lifelong learning' has broadened the concept of adult learning in a temporal sense, its Australian focus in the 1990s has been constrained by the close association with the education and training required for national prosperity (Shore 1992, 411). These issues highlight the strong attachment inherent in adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision to the 'meeting needs' agenda.

So while social justice outcomes have been the focus of many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, the notion of social justice embodied within such programs is generally an individualist one concerned with 'fairer' distribution of opportunities and skills development to individuals who have traditionally been marginalised or excluded from the educational process.

Such approaches to literacy provision promise 'social mobility, overcoming poverty and increased self-fulfilment' (Street 1984, 104). While there have been many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs that address specific needs of particular groups, for example, programs for people with disabilities or those in correctional institutions, the individual approach within these programs often tends to obscure the difficulties of achieving a wider range of social justice outcomes for groups generally marginalised by conventional educational programs.

Like Reid (1992), we suggest that approaches that target education about social justice or social justice in education are inadequate in addressing fundamental changes to educational settings or social interaction beyond classroom walls. These approaches are flawed in that they do not address the complexity of issues necessary for inclusive practices to have an impact beyond the classroom.

Reid proposes a third conceptualisation linking social justice to educational activity: *education for social justice*.

Any discussion of inclusive educational practices to achieve social justice goals must take account of beliefs held about members of various social groups, how membership of groups might shape actual educational provision, and the actual similarities and differences between and within social groups. Institutional practices must also be examined for how they enable or constrain people in their participation in social life. Such beliefs and practices influence how people go about organising and determining their own and others' involvement in social practices. Policy responses to the needs of particular social groups are central to developing and sustaining inclusive curricula.

In this project, we have adopted the position that a socially just society holds as central values about participation in social activity, expression of self and cultural experiences, and self-determination regarding social action (Young 1990). Such an approach focuses on the relational process by which groups negotiate their interaction and how outcomes of this are reviewed for the manner in which they reflect equitable opportunities for choice and action.

Inclusive curriculum as discussed in this project is ideally aimed at educational change that will enhance the possibilities that learners have

to determine actively how they make choices and act on those choices. This process will include certain things:

- being aware of fundamental rights and other possibilities for social action (that is, available and potential choices)
- developing the capacity to act on choices
- being aware of the reasons for, and constraints operating on, a particular choice
- understanding the consequences of particular actions and choosing to act or delay action for reasons related to the situational context.

But the creation of a socially just society and acting in it are no easy matters. Debates rage firstly about what a socially just society might look like, secondly, about how it might be achieved within capitalist contexts given existing levels of inequitable resource distribution and the tendency to avoid discussion of power relations at the heart of such matters, and thirdly, about the extent to which educational activity is likely to have any impact beyond the walls of adult literacy, language, and numeracy classrooms.

We believe that relations of power, and critical awareness of the real and socially constructed differences between social groups must be explored more fully to gain a clearer appreciation of what is involved in developing inclusive curriculum for social justice and the outcomes that might emerge from such a curriculum. To do this, we first elaborate on the concept of social justice and then explore briefly ideas about social groups and difference. For this section we have drawn largely from the work of Iris Young (1990) because of the many pragmatic concepts she develops to understand the complexities of social groups and difference. We are aware, however, that debates about social justice are extensive and controversial and suggest that further readings from the bibliography at the end of this document will offer alternative perspectives.

SOCIAL JUSTICE, SOCIAL GROUPS, AND DIFFERENCE

This project is about developing guidance for inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula, and during such a process, one might query why an inclusive curriculum would be offered in the first place. Various perspectives on social justice help to inform what an inclusive curriculum might look like, how that curriculum might be developed, and for what purposes it might be developed.

The concept of social justice is often associated with ownership and social position, a concept of 'having', of either resources or status, that Young (1990) refers to as a 'distributive' form of social justice concerned with the

morally proper distribution of social benefits and burdens among society's members. Paramount among the benefits are wealth, income, and other material resources.

Young proposes that two serious flaws emerge in conceiving of social justice as a process of distribution. First, a distributive concept of social justice masks institutional arrangements that lead to patterns of inequitable relations in the first place. It also takes for granted many inequitable decision-making procedures, work processes, and views of culture already embedded in existing institutional practices. It focuses attention on the product being distributed and quantities available for distribution rather than the deeply embedded institutional processes that enable distribution to occur in such a way that particular social groups are systematically advantaged.

Second, it incorrectly equates relational qualities such as opportunities with the distribution of material resources. Rights and opportunities are treated as the equivalent of commodities to be traded or given as a token gesture to equalise massive social inequalities.

An alternative view of social justice foregrounds relationships between social groups, rather than the material and social possessions acquired by groups, or the conceiving of relationships themselves in terms of distribution (Young 1990). Relational approaches to social justice move away from distributive notions of equalising resources or assuming the many and varied forms of social difference result in essentially similar forms of injustice and oppression. Relational approaches aim to extend participation in social life beyond the highly segmented and structured patterns of participation that currently exist. Young suggests this alternative view is summarised more appropriately as 'doing' rather than 'having'.

One relational approach suggests that obscuring the differences between groups and claiming equal treatment for all will result in equal outcomes for all. Equal opportunity policy is an attempt to redress social injustices in order to achieve equal outcomes of participation by groups normally marginalised in the dominant culture. It does this via a relational approach that advocates equal treatment for all by planing down social difference, selecting on a strict merit basis, and formalising equality of access. On the surface, this approach seems equitable, but there are significant problems inherent in obscuring differences between groups and in denying the history of group association in the consideration of merit. These problems will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter on inclusive policy.

Another type of relational approach proposes a 'politics of difference' that explicitly attends to differences between and within social groups. More

importantly, this latter approach rejects the tendency to position those who are different as deficit in relation to prevailing social norms. By adopting a politics of difference, many groups aim to reclaim the right to name their own reality in terms more positive than those usually equated with deviance and deficit in respect to the status quo. Their '[d]ifference now comes to mean not otherness, exclusive, opposition, but specificity, variation, heterogeneity' (Young 1990, 171). It is with this second relational approach that we have positioned ourselves in this project, although we recognise that there are also problems associated with adopting this position, which we explore later in this chapter.

This relational approach to social justice recognises that members of social groups have multiple identities and that a predominant identity chosen by an individual may change with the social context. Claims to particular identities such as 'woman', or 'Aboriginal person', or even silence about identity may represent a political or personal strategy of resistance (Jeffreys 1991). The claims (or silences) are often strategic and contextual; that is, they are a response to particular events and surroundings or even a reaction to a perceived or actual social response to a claim. Claims may not be consistent with the identity perceived by others. For example, older people may identify predominantly as male/female, or of rural extraction, rather than as an aged person.

The promotion of full participation and inclusion in social life requires that people understand the ways in which society operates to include or exclude various people, and, within the context of provision for social justice, this will also necessitate an understanding of the factors that contribute to people as individuals and members of groups actually achieving social justice outcomes.

Such a relational approach to social justice proposes that the differences and similarities between groups are valued and used as the basis for coexistence and enablement rather than for oppression and domination of some groups by others (Young 1990). This 'coexistence' can reduce socially constructed and systematically oppressive categories of difference to particular qualities held by individuals. A politics of difference must recognise also the political process whereby difference is constructed in the first place and how difference comes to be seen as 'human deviance' (Lorde 1992, 48).

This relational view of social justice revises conventional views of decision-making structures and procedures embedded in institutional and educational practices. It examines the ways in which educational work is usually identified, prioritised, allocated, and completed. It challenges the ways in which the culture of a learning setting generally reflects and perpetuates dominant values and meanings. In summary, socially just

educational settings and inclusive curricula take seriously the idea that curriculum will not exclude particular ways of understanding and 'doing'.

One further approach to understanding education for social justice focuses directly on how aims and purposes of inclusive curriculum evolve in the learning setting.

'Empowerment' is a term often used to describe the various aims and purposes of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision, but we suggest that disempowerment is often an experience more commonly identified by both learners and educators. When learners begin a course of study, there may initially be some inequality in the perceived power to influence educational processes (Wallerstein 1983). As Shore states:

> [D]ominant schooling practices have shaped expectations of educational practice; the conservative nature of these expectations is prominent in the continuation of largely traditional classroom practices in adult literacy classes (1991, 42).

While Shore focuses specifically on English-speaking-background learners, anecdotal evidence suggests that both experienced and inexperienced non–English-speaking-background learners often come with traditional expectations of learning and largely expect teachers to determine learning processes and products in conventional ways.

Initially, these unequal relations of power between educators and learners create imbalances in the contributions deemed to be of worth in classroom settings. Educational practices for social justice need to take account of the expectations learners and teachers have of educational settings. Such practices must acknowledge and attempt to dismantle ways of operating in classrooms that unnecessarily privilege teachers' formal knowledge and experience. We propose that an empowering adult literacy, language and numeracy pedagogy presupposes 'educational work [which] starts in a position of unequal social power and attempts to change that situation' (Connell 1991, 11). Like Young (1990), we believe that concepts of oppression and domination are more useful starting points for examining how social justice aims in the classroom might be thwarted, because such examination must then focus on relationships of power between social groups. Power, or its lack, is less likely to be viewed as a commodity or a material resource connected to a position. Empowerment or oppression can be seen clearly as a process of relating.

Unlike conventional views of oppression that liken it to the 'exercise of tyranny by a ruling group', Young has extended the notion of oppression to include:

> the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interaction . . . in short, the normal processes of everyday life (1990, 41).

These 'well-meaning people' may include educators, managers, and bureaucrats, whose well-intentioned practices aimed at generating socially just outcomes may not necessarily lead to the emancipatory outcomes they envisaged because relational practice is ignored. Young's interpretation of oppression presents serious challenges for the ways in which institutions enact mission statements proclaiming education for social justice and how educators plan and teach to meet the needs of learners within those institutions. Any analysis and evaluation of adult literacy, language, and numeracy for social justice will need to examine intended and unintended outcomes of programs, and more importantly, the relational practices associated with those outcomes.

Young offers a practical resume of the 'five faces of oppression' that is intended to assist our understanding of the multiple and complex experiences of oppression. While she acknowledges that social difference is the cause of many forms of oppression, she argues that the way in which circumstances oppress cannot be conceived of as simplistically additive. The particular circumstances of being a black person and a disabled person may or may not equate with the experience of being a black, disabled person.

The five faces of oppression

Exploitation

Exploitation represents 'a steady process of the transfer of the results of labor of one social group to benefit another ' (Young 1990, 49). In this way, the latter benefits by persistent transfer of the benefits of the work of the former due to specific relationships of power. A striking example of this within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field is represented in the labour of volunteers and of many paid workers that maintains an acceptable public profile of adult literacy work but is not recognised nor legitimised by systems. An ethos of 'making more with less' currently pervades educational provision and further exploits the work of both educators and learners by sustaining literacy, language, and numeracy provision at inadequately funded levels.

Marginalisation

Marginalisation mainly results from being excluded from a system of labour because that system cannot or will not use members of particular social groups. Marginalisation is apparent, for example, when older people are excluded from the workforce or social interaction and are entrapped in relations of dependency that define and limit their social interaction (for example, their receipt of a pension or unemployment benefits). Many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs have been marginalised within educational systems because the outcomes of such programs are not perceived as cost-effective or related to the prime purpose of the institution. The closer links between vocational training and

adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision have served to *increase* the marginalisation of programs not directly linked to economic outcomes. This has become evident in an apparent resistance or blindness to the needs of literacy learners not seeking courses to enhance their value as human capital in the workplace.

Powerlessness

Young proposes that oppression also occurs as a consequence of the lack of autonomy individuals have over their own labour. While absolute power is only achieved through the concerted actions of many, a number of people have relative power; they are able to exert some degree of control over their own actions and are able to make decisions that influence their own power base. In doing this, they may wittingly or unwittingly sustain power bases already established by others. The powerless on the other hand:

> have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgement in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect (Young 1990, 56).

Cultural imperialism

Cultural imperialism has been seen recently as a form of oppression, whereby the experiences and culture of one group are established as 'representative of humanity'. While this may be unintentional, the effect is to position those beyond the dominant culture as 'the other'. In contemporary times, the culturally oppressed, such as people with disabilities have been portrayed at varying times as dependent, lacking in creativity, having no sexual needs, and generally unable to participate in any form of life beyond functional survival. Yet people with disabilities have asserted their right to redefine and reclaim the boundaries of their abilities in response to limiting definitions from the dominant culture. Within the adult literacy field, both Horsman (1989) and Brodkey (1986) have noted a disturbing tendency among literacy theorists to portray those with limited literacy skills as 'the other'. In their being written about and talked about as a separate group, adult literacy, language, and numeracy participants are often portrayed as 'deviant' and unable to operate effectively in society. This ignores the richness of their lives in areas unrelated to the patterns of communication and control legitimated by literacy programs.

Violence

Violence is the final 'face' of oppression elaborated by Young, and it is often unaccounted for in distributive models of social justice. Its significance lies in the social contexts that initiate and sustain violence, and the manner in which social contexts establish a climate of acceptance of violence against others. In contemporary times, silence about current and past

injustices is a form of violence acted out on social groups. It is to this issue of silence that much inclusive practice will need to turn to adequately address what is alienating and oppressive in current practice.

The manner in which each of these conditions of exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence are supported by institutional practices to sustain limited opportunities for self-expression and self-determination leads to a situation of social injustice. **In the context of education for social justice and the development of inclusive curricula, attitudes towards oppression and domination highlight different kinds of educational practices: those that may unintentionally constrain social participation and, those that by virtue of their ability to block, silence, marginalise, or exploit systematically exclude members of certain groups from achieving full democratic participation in educational life.**

In summary, we would argue that distributive approaches to social justice take for granted the institutional structures that help determine patterns of distribution. By extending the commodity status of material goods to such relational qualities as self-respect, they portray relational qualities as products rather than aspects of social relations.

The ignoring of the differences between and within social groups, we suggest, perpetuates the institutional practice of universalising experience as an essential prerequisite for effective and efficient program operation. We believe that foregrounding difference is an essential precursor to revitalising the ways in which educational institutions respond to educational needs. It is also necessary to highlight the danger of a 'fetish for difference' (Kalantzis 1990, 47), in which the significant cultural differences between black and white women, or, indeed, between black men and black women are treated as superficial cultural artefacts. As well as being ignored or discounted, difference has been 'misnamed and misused' (Lorde 1992, 48) to obscure socially constructed and systematically oppressive ways of describing social groups.

This discussion provides a thumbnail sketch only of the issues central to understanding the complex process of inclusive curriculum development in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field. **Within the context of an education for social justice, an inclusive curriculum will be underpinned by these characeristics:**

- **an understanding that all groups have 'culture' or 'ethnicity'; for example, what is significant about white, Anglo-Saxon, masculine culture is its 'taken-for-granted' position as the dominant, valued culture; this obscures its 'ethnicity'**

- **recognition that curriculum development involves selecting knowledge and methods, which, as Connell notes, is not random or neutral with respect to the structure of the society in which it occurs (1988, 66); inclusive curricula must identify the choices that have been made and what drives the selection of these choices**
- **acknowledgement that curricula practices will be influenced by decision-making structures and procedures embedded within the institution in addition to work and cultural characteristics specific to the institution.**

Certain implications for guidance to develop inclusive curricula arise from the work of writers such as Young, Reid, Connell, and Street. **In order that distributive notions of social justice do not mask institutional patterns of oppression, domination, and disempowerment, critical attention must be directed towards these aspects of curricula:**

- **the educator–learner interface and institutional practices that influence adult literacy, language, and numeracy education for social justice; as Young (1990) states, this includes examining the structures and practices, the rules and norms that guide them, and the language and symbols that mediate social interactions within them, because these things condition people's ability to participate in determining their actions and their ability to develop and exercise their capacities**
- **oppressive decision-making and cultural practices that limit involvement, expression, and self-determination in learning settings and institutions**
- **decision-making procedures and cultural practices within institutions for the way in which they appear to be a 'natural' part of modern bureaucratic structures.**

If a positive notion of difference rather than a fetish for difference underpins relational concepts of social justice, then inclusive curriculum must do the following:

- **acknowledge the multiple perspectives that individuals bring to any learning situation as a result of their gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, and/or physical abilities**
- **recognise that membership of social groups is not necessarily confined to a single group; rather, recognise that identification is multiple and complex, and that**

where a focal identity is claimed, it may be in response to contextual factors (Young 1990) or inappropriately sought by others who have a narrow view of how people's identities exist in day to day life (Lorde 1992).

- **recognise the similarities between, and differences within, social groups, and acknowledge that experiences of oppression may not be able to be equated in simplistic additive terms on the basis of connections across common social groupings or common cultural backgrounds**
- **develop skills to examine critically the process of constructing social groups**
- **reflect the experiences of learners, both as individuals and as members of particular social groups**
- **actually value these experiences, and demonstrate this in the way they are used as the basis of learning and assessment**
- **acknowledge the processes by which conventional educational knowledge is constructed and loaded to maintain and enhance a position in social interaction generally dominated by white, middle class, able-bodied males**
- **identify where, how, and why conventional knowledge has systematically excluded the achievements, contributions, and experiences of various groups**
- **develop skills to examine critically social structures that systematically exclude and devalue individuals and particular cultural groups**
- **identify the values that underpin these structures**
- **examine whose interests are being served by these structures**
- **examine the power relationships within the structures**
- **develop policies that do not 'presume as the norm, capacities, values, and cognitive and behavioural styles typical of dominant groups thus disadvantaging others' (Young 1990, 173).**

These principles, guiding ideas and characteristics of inclusive curriculum set the context for inclusive curriculum development in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field.

ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND NUMERACY PROVISION

Any curriculum initiatives in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field will inevitably be influenced by the predominantly white, Anglo, mainstream focus of provision in Australia, the promises inherent in adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs to both teachers and students, any overseas developments in knowledge about teaching and learning in this field, and the theoretical and practice beliefs that are held by those groups who shape policy.

Central to some beliefs about adult literacy, language, and numeracy practice are notions of social justice, inclusive practices, access and equity, and a sense of empowerment brought about by freedom from the constraints of limited communication and academic skills. As can be seen from the previous discussion, however, these issues, and the implications for practice arising from them are not always as straightforward as they would at first seem. As concepts, they are open to interpretation by different political forces, especially in the different contexts of adult literacy learning, language learning, and numeracy learning, and in relation to the increasingly complex demands made on people in the 1990s.

Development of inclusive provision that critically reflects the variety of perspectives on these issues and that explicitly states the principles underlying them will be crucial in the planning for any system-wide adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula. Such provision will need to examine critically the following:

- **what is to be learnt?**
- **how?**
- **when?**
- **where?**
- **for what purpose?**
- **for whose benefit?**

While on the surface these questions may appear to be extremely broad and lacking in any detailed guidance to systems, institutions, practitioners, or learners, the questions themselves form the bedrock of strategies for promoting inclusive practices within educational programs promoting social justice as an outcome. Chapter three expands on curriculum guidance emerging from these questions.

Since this project is specifically concerned with the development of inclusive *adult literacy, language, and numeracy* curriculum, the central

role of language in communication must be examined since it is pivotal in the construction of meaning, and therefore identity and social relations.

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning consists of three distinct but overlapping approaches to learning how to communicate in the everyday sense of the word. It includes learning conventional norms and expectations of a variety of written and spoken English 'literacies' and 'numeracies'. It also introduces non–English-speaking-background speakers to the conventions of spoken and written language required for everyday communication in the English-speaking culture. These norms and conventions are often conservative and uncritical of the potentially limiting and controlling ways in which language and numeracy concepts are used. These are issues that need to be considered if staff and material resources are to address the vast and complex range of needs of teachers and learners. Both teachers and learners may be largely unaware of the multitude of ways in which the cultural imperialism of the English language defines participation in daily life.

Professional development, both preservice and inservice, is essential and will need to take into account the shifting demands of the many social, economic, and political literacies to which learners and educators are constantly exposed. This will necessitate also taking account of the significant similarities and points of difference between further English language development for native speakers and learners from non–English-speaking-background learning.

The following definition of literacy, which has been proposed by the Commonwealth for national adoption, raises other issues that are pertinent to curriculum development:

> Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.
>
> Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.
>
> All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to achieve its social and economic goals (DEET 1991, 9).

Although 'effective literacy' may be seen by some as rather narrow and economically driven, in the current political climate, it is clear that the above definition supports a view of literacy use as a social process. Literacy is portrayed as the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking, it has purpose and is influenced by the

contexts in which it is used, and it changes as a result of the life experiences and demands made on a person.

This definition is adequate to define common understandings of adult literacy, language, and numeracy and their role in shaping effective participation in Australian society. It is problematic, however, when examined in the light of claims for an education for social justice and the subsequent implications for an inclusive curriculum. **The definition renders invisible the gendered construction of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning, it is apolitical and ahistorical, and makes no allowance for the use of literacy, language, and numeracy as a tool for domination and oppression.** In addition, the definition forwards no model of *literacies* as an appropriate form of communication; that is, different ways of knowing and doing are ignored as needing to be included in the social construction of communication. Literacy is presented as a unified and unifying concept drawing individuals together in purposeful activity aimed at enhancing the welfare of people as individuals and as members of social groups.

While many non–English-speaking-background and English-speaking-background language learning settings readily acknowledge that there are different forms of English language, 'standard' English is generally prioritised, and the standard form is generally referred to as a universal and homogeneous language.

Existing descriptions of literacy and language fall short of the social justice intentions proposed in this project because of the limited acknowledgement of the diversity and value of literacy and language forms other than this false notion of a unified, universalised standard. The ways in which these literacies and forms of language may be used to coerce, silence, or coopt for socially oppressive purposes remains largely unexamined.

The task of this project was to provide guidance for the development of an inclusive approach to adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum. We have not made a claim for a particular form of literacy to be represented by the curriculum, but clearly our discussion is influenced by the increasingly explicit attention being given to the notion of critical literacy. Lankshear (1991) offers the following summary of the central tenets of critical literacy concerned with developing, refining, and expressing a consciousness of social reality:

- 'sociological' imagination
- an active and transformative stance towards the world
- awareness of how ideological representations of reality mask and buttress hierarchies of domination and inequality

- commitment to understanding wholes rather than mere parts, and parts in relation to wholes
- an interest in revealing contradictions within theories and practices to provide a more accurate understanding of reality as a basis for transformative action upon it
- a view of knowledge and truth that assumes theories to be interested rather than neutral and detached
- identification of the process of knowing as praxis.

We agree that critical literacy is about understanding and acting on relations of power that shape patterns of communication, both print and oral. To this end, well-developed theoretical approaches to literacy, language, and numeracy teaching are crucial, but we believe such approaches are incomplete, and inadequate in developing critical literacy, if they do not explicitly acknowledge how power comes to be attached to particular forms and genres of communication. While there are limits here to discussing this issue, it is relevant to note as examples that some competency-based curricula and genre or whole language approaches to learning are not generally explicit about the ways in which educational outcomes are geared towards maintaining prevailing social and educational norms. Thus, while these approaches have contributed to debates about what quality adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning might be, not all debates have been explicit about identifying the 'interested' nature of theories (Lankshear 1991). To be fair, critical pedagogues also fall short sometimes in declaring the particular interests of their own theories (see Elsworth 1989, and Clark 1990)

Since the purpose of this project is to examine factors that influence inclusive practices in a curriculum for social justice, we must examine how distributive views of social justice and current adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision might be at variance with the political dimension of social justice inherent in critical approaches to adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning. This requires rethinking the structures, processes, and content of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision.

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision focuses on increasing the ability of individuals to express themselves and participate in social settings. **It therefore seems central that an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula must play the following role:**

- **acknowledge that language is not neutral or value-free and that standard forms of language tend to position many social groups in opposition to, or invisible in, the prevailing culture**

- **make explicit that which is implicit in standard forms of language use that generally reflect the values and expectations of the 'mythical norm' (Lorde 1992, 48)**
- **be explicit about the power of language to empower and constrain social action and interaction**
- **examine the role and processes by which language is used to construct meaning.**

CURRICULUM ISSUES

To this point, we have talked largely about the principles and key strategies that we believe underpin an inclusive educational program aimed at generating socially just outcomes. There are a number of emerging perspectives on curriculum and curriculum development that will shape decisions made about curriculum at both the classroom and systemic levels.

Concepts of curriculum are central to how the promises of social and academic empowerment, inherent in the work of the field, might be enhanced by educational processes. Ideas about the curriculum, and curriculum development processes are themselves undergoing major change as theorists examine the nature of formal 'schooling' and educational processes within the context of education for social justice. There is general agreement that there are still 'persistent . . . massive inequalities in education' (Connell 1988, 63). Alternative curricula of the 1960s and 1970s, which offered separate and specifically tailored curricula for some groups, were not always seen as furthering the aim of changing the inequitable balance of schooling outcomes. Many debates about the alternative curricula have obscured critique of dominant educational curriculum:

> [which] marginalises other ways of organising knowledge, is integrated with the structure of organisational power, and occupies the high cultural ground, defining most people's commonsense ideas about what 'learning' ought to be (Connell 1988, 65).

Adult education literature (for example, Hart 1990, Foley 1992, and Westwood 1980) also reinforces this idea by citing the way in which middle class biases are perpetuated by many programs claiming to redress imbalances in social justice.

Perspectives on curriculum

The report, *An emerging national curriculum*, notes that adult literacy, language, and numeracy in Australia have been characterised by lack of documentation, limited curriculum accreditation, ad hoc professional development, and poorly developed systems for data collection (New South Wales TAFE Commission 1992). These were recurring themes

during the consultations undertaken for this project and have also been cited elsewhere (Wickert & Zimmerman 1989; DEET 1990). Adult education generally has not been taken seriously by government, industry, or community agencies in many parts of Australia, and this has resulted in lack of structural support for the field.

The same report further stated that sound adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum development processes and products should be informed in certain ways:

- explicit theorising underpinning methodologies
- clearly defined outcomes
- critical enquiry that is appropriate and relevant so that all students can experience success and satisfaction in their learning
- an emphasis on equity, which informs policy and curriculum development priorities
- high standards of quality via flexible implementation procedures, which address curricula frameworks, common terminology, modes of delivery, assessment, and evaluation
- qualified staff who have access to sustained professional development programs
- crosslinking with other curriculum development processes in such areas as English as a second language (ESL) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), mainstream education, vocational training
- agreement on performance indicators across the spectrum by those involved
- forms of data collection that are possible and retrievable while not being arduous (New South Wales TAFE Commission 1992).

We agree that any consideration of curriculum must account for aspects of the educational process beyond the educator–learner interface. Curriculum is all the learning experiences students have within a course *and* the experiences and decisions that impact on their learning in the course.

Anecdotal evidence during consultations, for example, suggested that although learners may be enrolled in a course of study, unsatisfactory experiences with administrators, other educators, employers, or employees within the learning institution may make them feel as though they do not belong. They experience overt harassment because of their own limited understandings of the new cultural setting into which they have moved and because of the racism, sexism, and inflexibility embedded in many conventional education and work settings. Adult literacy, language, and

numeracy learning is influenced by organisational practices and structures that extend beyond the walls of the immediate learning setting. While these are also issues that relate to access into adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, the learning institution's environment clearly has the potential to subvert 'inclusive practice' once learners are involved in programs.

Any curriculum that acknowledges the social nature of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning will need to acknowledge the pervasive influence of organisational culture on curriculum implementation: This will include examining these aspects:

- how adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs are integrated into the overall mission of an institution or system
- the procedures by which decisions affecting adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs are made
- the extent to which an administration supports the program
- how course priorities are identified
- how students are selected for courses and the criteria guiding selection
- the extent to which assessment and reporting mechanisms enhance further participation.

The implications are that guidance to sustain inclusive curriculum development will need to consider educators, learners, institutions, and the systems that support them in delivering curriculum. Essentially, institutions will need to ask what structural practices might need to be put in place to ensure that learners already inside the institution are not alienated by what appear to be obscure administrative processes impinging on their adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning beyond the immediate learning environment.

There are other consequences of a definition of curricula that encompasses all the activities influencing learning. Adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning takes place in a variety of settings, with responsibility for provision occasionally shared across systems. One school of thought holds that teaching and learning is fundamentally different across systems such as Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) for example, and therefore requires different curricula, even different types of people to implement the curriculum. Another school of thought holds that 'community' and workplace or vocational provision are different, and demands for particular learning outcomes by various stakeholders drive the content of curriculum. This school believes that there are tensions over how to reconcile what appear to be different learning demands within workplace, community, and more formal settings.

With the incorporation of institutional processes within the ambit of curriculum guidance, the overall picture of curriculum development is made much more complex. This requires curriculum developers and teachers to think more carefully about the real as opposed to socially constructed differences between curricula of the workplace vis-à-vis the community setting and to examine the usefulness of such divisions in terms of learning outcomes.

The following ideas that we discuss in respect of curriculum have been significantly influenced by Shirley Grundy's work on curriculum. Print (1987) and Lovat and Smith (1990) offer extensive reviews of curriculum literature but we believe that Grundy's work is of most use to this project since it locates the work of curriculum development within the realm of political action and is explicit about the empowering possibilities of educational work. Grundy (1987) suggests that three orientations to curriculum provide different ways of thinking about curriculum development and implementation. The orientations focus on the outcomes of learning and the potential imbalance in benefits accruing to various stakeholders in the teaching–learning process.

Curriculum as product

Many current curriculum packages portray curriculum as a series, of products, skills, and content to be delivered during a preplanned and often predetermined educational process. Such a process generally predetermines learning experiences. It is predicated on the notion that a quality curriculum identifies objectives, then meets those objectives through a series of planned learning experiences. Once objectives are defined within this perspective of curriculum development, content selection, implementation, review, and other aspects of curriculum development are viewed as unproblematic. Such curricula are often described as 'teacher-proof'. Teachers become managers of classroom procedures, or technicians of the activity sheet, skilled in finding the right exercise to fit the learner's need. Apple (1980) goes so far as to say that some curricula even predetermine student responses. Presumably, these curricula would then be labelled 'student-proof'.

Curriculum as practice

Grundy (1987) suggests that rather than its being described as a product, curriculum can be viewed as a series of judgements or decisions about what will in fact be 'best' for the learner, 'best' in this case being defined by curriculum decisions that are appropriate for the social uses to which literacy will be put. Such a curriculum proposes that 'learning, not teaching, will be the central concern of the teacher' (Grundy 1987, 69).

An approach that uses 'good judgement' as the basis of curriculum development will require some rethinking of the conventional processes

of curriculum development, implementation, and review. Negotiation would appear to be at the heart of this type of curriculum, and its central goal would be to meet learners' needs either as expressed by the learners themselves or as latent needs identified by educators who are conscious of demands likely to be made of learners in the future.

Curriculum as praxis

Grundy extends the notion of curriculum as a practice of judgements about what is inherently 'best' for the learner by identifying a form of curriculum as 'praxis'. Curriculum as praxis shifts the focus of decision-making during the educator–learner exchange in the practical curriculum to a form of decision-making that is orientated towards social change, the purpose of any education for social justice. A curriculum of praxis is explicit about the political and historical interests underpinning the judgements made about best action in the educational process. It therefore adds a political and historical dimension to any analysis of the action emerging from individual and practical needs identified by learners.

Some assumptions are made about curriculum that aims to change existing educational and social injustices:

- learners are active in the educational process
- educational work is meaningful to them
- the curriculum has a critical focus (Grundy 1987).

On the basis of anecdotal evidence and literature, it is possible to say that the first two criteria are met by many conventional adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs. But a critical focus may be interpreted in a number of ways. Rather than the cognitive gymnastics presented in many critical thinking packages, critical thinking from an education-for-social-justice perspective requires that knowledge of any kind is not taken for granted. Such critical thinking is based on the belief that knowledge is socially constructed and any comprehensive educational process must interrogate the various constructions of knowledge for the ways in which they limit and constrain people's ability to participate fully in social life. A curriculum of praxis will not take for granted the values and beliefs of teachers and/or the status quo. Learning will involve challenging these values and beliefs in addition to developing forms of action that are based on a process of action and reflection. All of this—critique, action, reflection—takes place within a framework that recognises the social, political and historical context of learners, educators, and the action arising from their work together.

A curriculum that assists learners and educators to make decisions within situated contexts will not necessarily propose equal treatment as a principle underpinning learning and teaching. The principle of equal

treatment originally arose as a formal guarantee of fair inclusive treatment. This mechanical interpretation of fairness is, however, in danger of suppressing difference (Young 1990), which we see to be a valuable and inherent aspect of any social context.

A curriculum that aims for inclusivity, that is, acknowledges and makes explicit the complex and interrelated histories of both learners and educators, will not consider the same inclusive practices to be relevant or appropriate for all groups. For example, a curriculum that treats all students equally denies the various faces of oppression embedded in the political histories of students as members of social groups that are unable to be simplistically reduced to description by one cosmetically apparent attribute (for example, colour or sex). Older women's marginalisation and powerlessness may not equate automatically with the marginalisation and powerlessness experienced by disabled women or that of Aboriginal women, particularly in contemporary Australian society (see O'Shane in Jeffreys 1991).

A curriculum that treats all students individually, as is the claim of many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, ignores the social aspect of literacy practice, which must accommodate constraints, such as racism and sexism. These constraints actively operate to impede members of particular social groups from actually using their literacy skills (Rigg & Kazemak 1984). The judgements that educators make as they implement an inclusive curriculum will need to be underpinned by sophisticated understandings of what it means to be a person who lives with various labels that position her or him beyond the 'mythical norm' (Lorde 1992, 48).

The implications of this argument are significant for those educators charged with the responsibility of overseeing the development of inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula. **Curriculum development processes will need to pay attention to these aspects:**

- **the manner in which curricula are developed to ensure the process is not divorced from the teaching–learning setting**
- **existing organisational structures and curriculum development processes to ensure they do not perpetuate hierarchies of power and difference**
- **the rules that govern curriculum development to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to consultative processes**
- **consultative procedures that do not ignore the voices of those client groups the curriculum claims to serve**

- **the planning, enacting, and evaluating of processes to ensure a reflexive relationship between curriculum conception, implementation, and review.**

In summary, a curriculum that situates judgements relating to action in political and historical context will also consider curriculum components beyond the educator–learner interface.

A curriculum that identifies learning as a socially oriented process aimed at education for social justice also faces major questions about the overall outcomes it seeks in response to particular demands made by community groups. A central dilemma throughout this project has involved action in educational settings to 'meet the needs' of learners as individuals and as members of social groups.

We believe, on the basis of our understanding of existing literature and our consultations with participants and practitioners, that two ways of thinking about 'meeting needs' might be useful to consider. On the one hand, recent debates indicate there is no agreement on a 'primal' cause of oppression (Young 1990). If oppressions are viewed as separate, but additive, they cannot account for how 'working women [for example] are oppressed not simply as workers but as women workers' (Tong in Jeffreys 1991, 5). On the other hand, within Australian society Connell proposes:

> mainstream curriculum is . . . part of the cultural and practical underpinnings of the ascendancy of particular social groups, specifically capitalists and professionals, men, Anglos (1988, 68).

In practice, exploitation or marginalisation occurs by, within, or across each of the four social groups Connell names. Many people find they are persistently positioned outside these prevailing norms and are often asked to choose which aspect of their 'otherness' reflects the essence of their identity (Lorde 1992). This is like being asked as a project team to remove that part of us which is Anglo and identify purely as women.

We believe that the challenge for educators lies in attending to the immediate needs as expressed by learners in educational setting. Given a supportive and accepting climate, however, expressed needs in the classroom may not reflect the needs and capacities of an individual whose life is systematically disorganised by wider social processes (compare Horsman 1989). Therefore, teachers will be responsible for drawing out potential learning needs that may arise as students move beyond the classroom to articulate ideas or put skills into practice.

Guidance on what might be involved in balancing and tending to these needs must be underpinned by a view of curriculum as praxis: making judgements situated in historical and political context, acting on those judgements, reflecting on the consequences of action, and moving on accordingly.

Day-to-day judgements about teaching and learning will include a mix of product-orientated decisions based on a need to achieve particular tasks within a particular context of social relations. As Lankshear has said:

> It is one thing to argue . . . that conventional approaches to functional literacy negate personal control and critical, informed and rational engagement with one's world; that instead of enhancing control and understanding, such functional literacy 'offers a deeper induction into and further affirmation of the very consciousness of daily life which maintains and reinforces social relations and practices of structured advantage and disadvantage'.
>
> It is another thing altogether to speak critically to the urgently felt needs of the illiterate, unskilled, and dispossessed. Emancipation is doubtless what dispossessed people would ultimately seek. In the meantime, to put it prosaically, they desire to eat (1991 24).

What is central to a curriculum perspective based on the notion of praxis is that its empowering aspect developed through negotiation and critical analysis is not lost in the rush to achieve educational end-products defined and devised in isolation from learners' actual literacy practices.

A curriculum of praxis designed to be inclusive of the values, beliefs, and needs of learners requires some rethinking of the role of the teacher in educational and curriculum development processes. First, such a curriculum will need to be explicit about the important role of adult educators, who also have a unique contribution to make as participants in the learning setting. As they come to each setting, they face the challenge of 'relearning' existing knowledge and skills with each group of new participants (Shor 1987, 101) rather than transmitting already acquired knowledge and skills. Such a curriculum also needs to recognise that while teachers are central to the curriculum process, much existing training generally does not equip them to make the kinds of politically and historically situated judgements inherent in a curriculum underpinned by notions of inclusivity and praxis. Where training is sufficient, the institutional norms around decision-making and work procedures may often work to undermine their individual attempts at inclusive practice.

SUMMARY

In our development of guidance to inform the development of inclusive curriculum, we wanted to present a theoretical framework that would be explicit about its values and would be open to interrogation. The project has faced a number of challenges.

First, there has been the challenge 'to devise a strategy that will achieve ends without further disadvantaging students already marginalised by the educational system (in the way the alternative curriculum strategy did) and

without becoming appropriated by conservative or liberal interests' (Reid 1992, 7-8). At one level, this appropriation has already happened with a number of women's studies courses and cultural awareness programs in mainstream education. Such programs often increase participants' awareness of injustice but avoid discussion of the structural arrangements whereby injustice is perpetuated.

Second, there has been a challenge to envisage how inclusive curricula might operate within inclusive systems. What makes this issue more difficult for the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field are the range of institutional sites where adult literacy, language, and numeracy is offered, the varying motives of learners, the varying pedagogies and motives of educators, and our assumption, supported in the literature, that educational institutions generally reflect and reproduce the inequalities of society at large. Many of these same institutions already profess inclusive intentions but are often unable to sustain these promises in practice. Guidance to sustain inclusive curriculum development must address the process whereby curricula are put in place, the content, methods, and resources to implement and review the curriculum, as well as activities such as training and development, and articulation and accreditation of courses.

The literature on education for social justice proposes that an inclusive curriculum is an important component, but only one of the components necessary in laying a foundation for socially just educational practices. Inclusivity itself must be addressed from the standpoint of those it is intended to include. A flaw in many inclusive curricula is the notion that equal treatment or explicit acknowledgement of difference are enough to redress past imbalances in educational participation. For adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum to be inclusive, we believe that it is important to recognise not only that adult literacy, language, and numeracy education is a vehicle of cultural transmission, but also that it transmits a particular form of culture.

Inclusive curricula may offer chances to rebalance this narrow selection of cultural values transmitted during the educational process, but as Connell (1988) suggests, there is no guarantee of the correctness of that selection. In portraying curriculum development within the educational process as a selection of prized cultural values, beliefs, and activities, it is necessary to ask not only whose culture is being transmitted, but also who makes the selections from the culture, how and why are those selections made, who benefits from these selections, what selections have been excluded, and what led to the selections in the first place? We would propose that each participant in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy process, be she/he learner, educator, or administrator, might also ask, 'what is my role in making these selections and to what extent

do I sustain an educational program that may not be in the best interests of the client group the curriculum claims to serve?'

The theoretical framework for thinking about adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision, social justice, and difference that we have proposed in this chapter is partial. The full range of debate in respect of these issues is not covered, but we believe our discussion goes some way to flagging the complex decisions and judgements associated with curriculum development for inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. It is clear that adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision is historically situated in the 1990s in what is often viewed as a time of political and economic crisis. While literacy's 'time has come' (Zimmerman & Norton 1989, 163), there are still many questions to be asked about the cultural values, practices, and educational outcomes that pervade existing provision, and the extent to which these values accurately reflect the needs of the various client groups they claim to serve.

CHAPTER 2: POLICY AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

The kind of ideal curriculum processes that are characterised in this document requires that the philosophies and practices of social justice and inclusivity must permeate every level of the system, at the public and personal face of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. This means that what happens in classrooms, in corridors, in the cafeteria, at the reception desk, over the phone, in staff offices, and at every meeting, will shape the degree to which inclusive policy and guidance strategies will be enacted through learners' experience.

An important part of our argument in this document is that systemic responsibilities need to be foregrounded as crucial to effective implementation of inclusive curriculum for social justice. While responsibilities at the teacher–learner interface need to be examined to implement socially just practice in the classroom, those who operate at the system level also have to examine the way in which social injustice is reflected and recreated in the relations of power in the system's organisational structure. Administrators, coordinators, and managers have responsibilities for implementing inclusive policy in the organisation and work practice of the system that supports inclusive curriculum, since the system cannot advocate policy for the classroom that it does not itself reflect or recreate. It is important, too, that teachers, who implement an inclusive curriculum, are aware of the responsibilities of systems to support them in their educational work. Without this knowledge of what is required to enact an inclusive curriculum, many teachers will continue to wonder why their individual 'good works' appear to have such limited impact.

This chapter deals with the process of ensuring that the principles of inclusivity pervade adult literacy curriculum policy and policy-making to form the bedrock both for work practice within organisations and education for social justice. First, we identify what we believe to be the principles underlying an inclusive system and elaborate why policy is an important component of the process of examining and redefining relations of power. We then examine inclusive policy initiatives and how these initiatives have been implemented in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy context. Finally, we discuss historical and current trends in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, and the implications for implementing inclusive curriculum.

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING AN INCLUSIVE SYSTEM

On the basis of the argument elaborated for education for social justice, we believe that there are certain fundamental principles that underpin an ideal inclusive system whose responsibility is to deliver inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum. **These inclusive principles are as follows:**

- **the system accepts the need for change to redress existing social inequalities**
- **the system has identified its educational role in that change**
- **it is explicit about its values, processes, and the purposes it seeks to achieve**
- **difference is valued as a positive force for change**
- **participation is central to effective change**
- **the system initiates social change by being flexible, reflexive, and accessible.**

All employees in an inclusive educational system need to be aware of these principles and clear about the implications for educational and management practice. These principles provide the basis on which any form of advocacy or action for change will occur. In order for these principles to be manifest, the policy framework necessary to the implementation of the system needs to be examined.

POLICY LEVELS IN THE THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

An examination of the policy framework for adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula entails unpacking the framework of the relations of power within the field. Policy exists at all levels of educational practice, since it is based on the ideas, beliefs, and opinions fundamental to the constructed identity of the culture. Policy is relational because it positions one in relation to others in respect of who does what, who benefits, and what work is valued. In Australian society, the cultural specificity of the dominant social grouping—white, male, Anglo, middle class—is embedded in the educational system as well as the curriculum it implements. This grouping expresses its identity as universalised and uniform, which disguises its specificity within the relations of power. This also effectively disguises the political agenda of this social group: to recreate itself, since this also recreates the benefits accrued from a position of privilege.

We believe the newly acquired bureaucratic framework of the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field is predicated on this dominant culture, and that policy-making within the education system will reflect,

whether explicitly or otherwise, existing power relations. In these relations, we suggest the dominant social grouping seeks to maintain the status quo, while groups defined by the status quo as 'other' than the 'norm' seek to reinterpret society in ways that value their difference. Their reinterpretation is often (encouraged to be) in the form of translating their ways of knowing and doing into forms that are acceptable and recognisable within the dominant structure of power relations.

Increasingly, the wider bureaucracy beyond the education system is recognising the need for policy changes to redress social injustice. It has identified that there is a need for social institutions to reflect the diverse make-up of its Australian culture, and accordingly, it has formulated strategies to address overlooked issues on access and opportunity, multiculturalism, the position of women, people with disabilities, the aged, and the long-term unemployed. The wider system has also identified that there is an educational component necessary to institute these changes. The adult literacy, language, and numeracy field has been targeted as a doubly effective vehicle by which to institute change, since it intersects with the workplace as well as the education system.

In this document we have argued, however, that the claims for social justice made by the dominant culture have stopped short of examining the most fundamental obstacle to social justice: the defining and positioning of certain groups at the margins of society based on their difference. This positioning will inform the decision-making structures and the culture reflected at all levels of the system and in the curriculum. Currently, in the explicit values and purposes expressed within the educational system, difference is valued not as a positive force for change but as a positive resource to be harnessed for the status quo. Participation is still constrained by the confines of the organisational power structure, which is still essentially rigid not flexible, reactionary not anticipatory, and generally inacessible to those marginalised from power. In the context of education for social justice, we believe that it is particularly important that educational policy sustains the political and relational focus of inclusivity, in order to address these fundamental issues of participation and positioning based on difference.

As the articulated position of a group, policy exist at macro and micro levels of relations. It is important to differentiate because issues impact in different ways at different levels, even if the policy as it is articulated is the same. Policy will inform different practice according to the specific range of activities that occur at different levels of the system. *Macro policy* deals with overall position and can relate to a specific issue. This could include the position an organisation as a whole takes in relation to a particular issue, or an overall plan of action that creates an umbrella over specific applications of that plan. *Micro policy* deals with what happens in given

circumstances in relation to a specific issue, that is, how the macro policy is to be applied in specific situations. Certain *strategies* may be initiated to implement these policies decisions.

Equal opportunity is an example of both macro and micro policies. It provides a broad position for the education system as a whole for making selections from the culture for employment or education purposes regarding certain groups identified as under-represented in cultural institutions. It states that individuals should be considered and selected on the basis of merit alone (Falahey 1985).

Equal opportunity as a micro policy is intended to govern what occurs in the actual selection procedure, or the promotion procedure—the specific work practice. This is a form of inclusive practice aimed at redressing the imbalance of representation of marginalised groups at different institutional levels.

Affirmative action is a preferred strategy to implement equal opportunity decisions. It posits that selection should favour marginalised groups where choice on the basis of merit does not show a clear path. (The debate surrounding affirmative action is huge and cannot here be paraphrased adequately. We have made a choice to focus on equal opportunity as broad policy informing the implementation of affirmative action, and direct the reader interested in affirmative action to Thornton 1990, Livingston 1979, and Hawkesworth 1984 for a fuller understanding of the debate.)

Whilst macro policy may be clear in its intended values and aims, many problems arise at micro level in the specific implementation of broad positioning. Many of these problems arise because the macro policy is not explicit about its own range and reach, and there are no clear guidelines for specific work practice in particular instances. For example, one macro policy recently favoured by the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field deals with the need for student-centred learning. How this policy is articulated and interpreted at the micro policy level will affect both inclusive work practice and the development of inclusive curricula.

Problems also arise from policy-making procedures, where many of those directly affected and governed by policy have no role in the development of that policy. Within the system, these voices, constructed as silent consent, cannot contribute to decision-making, or evaluation and reform of policy, except from either of two limited positions. The first position involves groups being recognised by the larger dominant paradigm but being unable to wield power in the formulation of policy outcomes (Young 1990). In the second, the participation of marginalised groups is contrained by prevailing power relations: these 'other' voices are assimilated into the decision-making process but can contribute only in ways constructed by the dominant paradigm (Deloria 1970).

We think that the policy process could therefore be construed as a form of 'bureaucratic colonialism' on the part of management, in which decisions for the marginalised, oppressed, indeed everyone associated with the educational system, are made on their behalf. We suggest that for the purposes of inclusivity for social justice, the purposes and process of policy-making procedures, and participation of different groups in these procedures need examination as well as policy itself. We think that this is especially salient for the development of inclusive curricula intended to reflect the needs and values of different social groups and to provide the means for choice and self-determination.

INCLUSIVE POLICY AND POLICY-MAKING PROCEDURE

In broad terms, inclusive policy does not marginalise on the basis of group affiliation, but seeks instead as Young states:

> the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society's major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices (1990, 173).

For the purposes of this project, inclusive policy recognises difference as a positive force for social change. This means active self-determination must be part of the power relations experienced by participants within the system through a process of negotiation and articulation of different needs and values. Such a process might sound unwieldy, impractical, and divisive, but we believe that certain precedents exist that would indicate that these 'problems' are surmountable, especially if the process remains fluid for refinement (see Wellins et al 1991).

Inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy policy would need to address decision-making, advocacy, evaluation, and review to reach into workplace practice and initiate change based on the positive value of difference. Inclusive decision-making, for example, would involve the choice to participate in the process of determination within an organisation and the opportunity to negotiate for particular work conditions to take account of specific and different needs of participants. This may mean that the procedure for decision-making takes place within the relations of a forum, for example, rather than within the relations of an hierarchy in which a few at the top of the hierarchy are invested with power. If participants in the organisation choose not to participate directly in decision-making, inclusive policy would require that a system of representation be available with clear and explicit guidelines on the extent and nature of the role of representatives as advocates within the relations of decision-making. This process would also require clear and target-orientated arbitration to ensure the process remains dynamic, possibly with the rotation of individuals in the arbitration position so that no one view or agenda gets entrenched or foregrounded over others.

Most importantly, an inclusive policy-making process needs to be explicit in its statement of values, intent, and purpose, in order that it can be scrutinised and challenged, and interpreted differently. This means that inclusive policy must allow for evaluation and review of both policy and procedure, since different ways of relating will inform different types of participation. We stress that the explicit nature of inclusive policy and policy-making is essential so that the inclusive process does not itself become another form of bureaucratic coercion isolated from articulated community needs (Deloria 1970).

CURRENT INCLUSIVE POLICY IN THE ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND NUMERACY CONTEXT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Currently, inclusive policy in most systemic arenas, including the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, consists largely of equal opportunity and affirmative action, and the use of inclusive language in curricula, public documentation, and rhetoric.

The use of inclusive language obviously goes some way towards the acknowledgement of hitherto invisible and often marginalised participants in the culture. Inclusive intiatives in adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula focus on the examination of stereotypes in language and the need for gender-inclusive and ethnic-inclusive language promulgation. At the beginning of this project, we identified the need for inclusive initiatives like language revision policy to embrace other issues besides gender and ethnicity. We identified age, non–English-speaking background, disability, and unemployment as aspects of marginalisation and highlighted the need for inclusive language policy to broaden its brief.

We also reached the conclusion that inclusive language use must be partnered by policy that manifests recognition and acceptance of difference as valuable. This policy will position people in the culture's institutional processes so that they can actively influence their educational opportunities.

Equal opportunity as inclusive policy

There is a perceived need within the education system for strategies to gain representative voices and for policy that reflects the diverse needs of social groups that ordinarily are marginalised within the dominant paradigm. Equal opportunity policy promotes the inclusion of marginalised groups into societal institutions and structures. It works on the premise that selection based purely on merit will avoid or reverse discrimination that marginalises individuals on the basis of their cultural grouping. This principle has done much historically to shift unequal representation within the culture.

qual opportunity policy embraces the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field through two intersection points. Literacy is the equal opportunity area of the education system, which claims to address the needs of people who 'missed out' in initial schooling or of those adults who have newly entered the educational system as language learners. Literacy in the workplace is an equal opportunity policy decision within industry. Both are to some extent driven by the need that distinguishes *adult* literacy, language, and numeracy issues from other literacy, language, and numeracy issues: the requirement for adult participants in the culture to take on responsibilities for their own social and economic welfare. Equal opportunity policy is supposed to furnish adults in the literacy, language, and numeracy field with socially just outcomes and more equitable participation in society's public institutions.

Changes in policy-making towards inclusive policy have arisen from recognition within the system of the existence and position of marginalised groups, and then from attempts by the system to embrace these groups. Arguably, this recognition has come about in two main ways: first, through marginalised groups using systemic processes to organise and advocate in order to be heard, as in the example of Aboriginal lawyers using the dominant culture's legal education system to gain a voice and advocacy role for the self-determination of Aboriginal people; second, through moral and theoretical initiatives from within the dominant culture pressing for changed attitudes and for practice that reflects these changes, such as, for example, in the calls within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field for student-centred learning.

A comprehensive approach to inclusive policy across the education system, however, is lacking. The disparate historical nature of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision partly accounts for the lack of a comprehensive approach to inclusive policy. We would argue that this lack is also in part due to the limitations within equal opportunity policy itself, which constrains a comprehensive approach to inclusivity and ensures that social justice initiatives continue in piecemeal fashion. Equal opportunity as macro policy has broad implications for micro policy decision-making and advocacy but provides little substance in the way of explicit guidelines for practice at the micro level and explicit articulation of the interpretation of inclusivity and values on which those guidelines are based.

There is a limited mandate in equal opportunity policy for scrutinising the existing relations of power within the education system. Marginalised groups are admitted to participate in the dominant structure as a direct outcome of equal opportunity policy. But this is generally not accompanied by an examination of the need for change in the relations of power within institutions, or an examination of the potential for marginalisation of those admitted groups through unjust work practice or behaviour. 'Inclusion' in

this sense does not necessarily mean access to decision-making, nor does it manifest transformed relations of power for the marginalised.

Instead, equal opportunity is based on two premises that we think are dubious because of how they construct the value of difference and the importance of participation.

First, equal opportunity works to deny group affiliation by formalising equality (Thornton 1990). There is a presupposition that the institutions that endorse this formalising are themselves universal—neutral or non-aligned in terms of group association. Instead, we suggest like Thornton and Young that institutions represent the interests of the dominating cultural group: 'the disembodied ideal of masculinist bureaucracy' (Young 1990, 176). Formalising equality also presupposes that equality can be conferred, and that conferring the 'opportunity' necessarily entails access, choice, and participation. But as Young states, 'policies that are universally formulated and thus blind to differences of race, culture, gender, age, or disability often perpetuate rather than undermine oppression' (1990, 173).

Formalising equality and avoiding group specificity means that the system needs another form of selection procedure. Equal opportunity's preferred selection criterion is merit. Merit, however, denies the historicity of the individual. It denies the oppression that the individual has faced due to her or his cultural affiliations to get to the present position (Hawkesworth 1984). It requires that the individual is judged not on her or his own terms, or on the basis of the *value* of her or his difference, but according to the criteria of the dominant culture. This approach to selection for courses or employment skews who participates in and determines adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision.

Formalising equality also denies the role of the difference of the individual as a positive force for change. The articulated needs of recognised marginalised groups are reinterpreted to fit within existing power relations, rather than their being used as a basis for interrogating the injustices of the system. Their different ways of knowing and doing are confined to particular and restricted manifestations, acceptable within the paradigm of the dominant culture. The marginalised groups may be embraced legislatively and rhetorically, but the specific nature of what their individual voices say goes unheard.

Second, equal opportunity policy is premised on a deficit model (Thornton 1990), which focusses on those who are marginalised as being 'victims' of the system requiring integration into (existing) decision-making structures. Ironically, this ignores their historical oppression and focuses on their momentary level of merit. Because of its universalistic approach, equal opportunity policy presupposes that these people will either have, or will

acquire, the 'normalised' skills considered necessary to function within the system. Legally, equal opportunity policy does not require, however, that provision is made for people to have access to time, or the resources, for the professional development they need to achieve 'normalisation'. The possibility of negotiating the necessity of 'normalised' skills is also not an option.

This limited conceptualisation of 'inclusive' policy instead tends to marginalise further those already marginalised. Constructed as outsiders to the dominant culture, these admitted participants tend to become token representatives of the groups with which they identify, and unreasonable demands are made of them. They are forced to work doubly hard, in their specific role, and in their conferred representative role. If they want to alter practice, their efforts must increase, simply because of the stereotype their presence carries in the eyes of those comfortable within the dominant culture. The onus for changing the unjust structures that they have entered also rests entirely on their shoulders (Thornton 1990), since they have to provide both a good justification for change and then drive it (see Bin-Sallik 1991 for example).

One problem here is that these marginalised groups are constructed in terms of being 'other': their difference is perceived in a monolithic fashion, which must be in dichotomy with the dominant culture. Their historicity is denied, and their history constructed in uncompromising fashion. Also, their choice to participate as they see fit is denied.

Therein lies another of the limitations of equal opportunity as inclusive policy. The process envisaged for change within the system is limited, especially in respect of gaining representative voices and perceiving needs.

The limits to how change is conceived are partly due to the piecemeal conceptualisation of inclusivity because of different types of provision and motivations in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field. They are also a result of the fact that equal opportunity, as the potentially favoured inclusive policy implemented by a new bureaucratic structure, may in fact constrain inclusive initiatives arrived at separately from within the field. For instance, a process of consultation by which to perceive the needs of marginalised groups—an equal opportunity initiative—has grown out of the implementation of calls in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field for student-centred learning. Without the directional force of educational bureaucracy, these calls may have initiated change in a different direction to that of equal opportunity.

An examination of the process of selecting representatives and the role of representatives within this consultation uncovers all sorts of issues in respect of inclusivity for social justice. We discovered in this project in our

consultation with representative voices from the field that an inclusive conceptualisation of representation is possible but is constrained by traditional ideas of representation that deny individuals the simultaneous expression of their personal and public group affiliations. This traditional method inevitably relegates representation to a form of surrogacy and personal experience is silenced in favour of one's public face. It also creates an unreasonable demand that the individual prioritise her or his many different ways of knowing and doing through the constant demand for the 'appropriate' voice.

The perceived needs of marginalised groups are generally arrived at from consultation with voices *within* educational organisations: students or teachers who have already been selected by the criteria of the dominant culture and are operating from a prescribed position of power within the system. Recognition of the needs of different groups in courses has been dependent on the ability of these groups to organise and advocate according to a structure recognised by the dominant culture. The loudest and those most organised according to the methods of organisation recognised within the dominant culture will be heard—the silent, the less audible, or those who organise and advocate in different ways will be mostly invisible, or if seen, will be assumed to be 'content'. Change, then, will be based on a selection of needs articulated by a selection of voices recognised and constructed in particular ways.

Equal opportunity policy obviously allows for consultation with voices beyond the educational system. In *Overcoming distance: isolated rural women's access to TAFE across Australia* (Mageean 1988), consultation has actively sought for those voices beyond TAFE provision, while the recommendations in the guidelines are clearly based on equal opportunity principles. Rather, the manner in which equal opportunity provides a policy framework for implementation of social justice initiatives is the constraining factor due to the construction of difference in the policy. For example, in these guidelines, it is recommended that a 'percentage of positions in all programs for which there is likely to be demand for rural women be held to allow country people extra time in which to apply' (Mageean 1988, 1). The problem with such action is that it runs the risk of holding places for women to be admitted to courses that are not inclusive in methodology, delivery, structure, or content. Also, it is predicated on a claim of knowledge of which courses women will demand, but it makes no provision within this claim for the possible need for transformation of beliefs about what is appropriate for women to study.

Nor does this policy ensure any certainty of continued provision of courses in which women can participate, traditional or otherwise. Currently, education provision in any sector in Australia is inextricably linked to the 'numbers game'. Courses that do not make their numbers in terms of what is considered economically viable to run are notorious for not being

reoffered. This creates a dilemma for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision—be it current good practice or inclusive curriculum—which argues for a wider range of choice of content and courses that is not driven by economic rationalism and end-product–orientated funding mechanisms.

So an initiative based on inclusive consultation eliciting a common problem and a subsequent need of distance-marginalised rural women may be compromised potentially by a lack of transformation in the structure of TAFE rural provision and stereotypic views on what women require in the way of courses. This is a good example of how the conceptualising of inclusivity, according to equal opportunity policy can constrain otherwise inclusive practices initiated within and by the field.

The limits to consultation within the field also obviously do not preclude other voices beyond the system being heard in other fora and filtering through, especially since education, and literacy issues in particular, have been constructed as being part of social justice issues in general. Some retrospective consideration has also been given to the fact that if there are some obvious marginalised groups, there must be other silenced/silent or less visible/invisible marginalised groups, which must be 'recognised'. Vine Deloria (1970) cites his experience of white liberals trying to inveigle American Indians to participate in the 'cultural revolution' simply because white liberals perceived them to be an 'other' group. Even when these voices beyond the system are courted, however, their participation can be constrained by the criteria accepted by the dominant culture:

> During the rise of the civil rights movement and its expansion into the power movements, Indian people were often derided for their refusal to participate in demonstrations and confrontations. Every time an activist discovered Indians, he was horrified to learn that they were not about to begin marching. Because they equated Indian problems with those of other groups, many people felt that if Indians used the same tactics which had worked with the black community, Indian problems would be solved. Everyone spoke of the spectacular results that other groups were having, and it became sociological heresy for Indians to refuse to imitate these other groups (Deloria 1970, 45)

Difference as a positive force for social change means that one cannot make assumptions about the ways in which particular social groups will participate in education, or, indeed, about the reasons for their choice.

Those who are consulted beyond the field are not necessarily part of the determining process for changing selection and provision within the field. They may influence these parts of the process but have little power in the relationship of consultation actually to determine changes for two reasons. First, their power within the consultative process is constructed on the dominant cultural paradigm's terms, which recognise their organisation and form of advocacy and negotiation as legitimate. Second, their influence to co-create change is limited because the consultative process

is focussed on directing change to a particular outcome. Currently, this outcome is directed to harnessing the diverse human skills and resources of marginalised groups for economic purposes by increased participation in adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. This purpose is explicitly reflected in Government policy documents such as *National agenda for multicultural Australia ... sharing our future* (Office of Multicultural Affairs 1989), and *Affirmative action for women: a policy discussion paper* (Ryan & Evans 1984).

This product-orientated type of consultation provides for their presence in the consultation process but no guarantee that the voices of these groups will not be reinterpreted by the main cultural group in order to fit into the political agenda of that group. Selection—of voices to be heard, or needs to be met, of issues to be dealt with, or participants to include—is therefore according to the criteria of the dominant culture.

This type of consultation can achieve positive policy changes moving towards inclusivity, such as micro level initiatives that may influence some people to stay in courses. It does not necessitate a review of organisational structure and relations of power within that structure in order to ensure greater participation in the curriculum. It does not, for example, consider the need for a review of student advocacy procedures within the organisation or elaborate the potential for students to negotiate the content of the curriculum. Co-creation and evaluation are, we believe, two essential components of inclusive policy underlying an inclusive curriculum.

With an emerging bureaucracy, which we believe will be based on the wider bureaucratic model, the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field will probably endorse equal opportunity policy in institutional procedures, if this has not already occurred in individual institutions within the field. This may include the endorsement of equal opportunity advocacy procedures for adult literacy, language, and numeracy workers, and quite possibly already embraces some students through the workplace. Since we have argued that an inclusive curriculum is affected by decisions made in all the parts of the system, what implications exist for the application of equal opportunity advocacy procedures within an inclusive curriculum?

Equal opportunity advocacy procedures are limited in terms of inclusivity for social justice. The process of advocacy focuses on a conceptualisation of opportunity and rights as commodities that can be dealt out (Young 1990). Equalising the dealing is seen to remedy the social injustice because everyone will have an equal outcome at the end: the same legal rights and formalised opportunities as everyone else (Thornton 1990). We have consistently argued in this document that there are flaws in the distributive conceptualisation of social justice because there is no

acknowledgement of the relations of power in that constrain participation and self-determination over outcomes.

The advocacy process defined in current equal opportunity legislation means that cases of discrimination are dealt with on an individual basis. This denies the claimant the choice to bring about change through organisation in the form of her/his choice, and/or group-supported 'dissent'. These advocacy processes are allowed in most other cases of disputed discrimination within the dominant culture, like wage claims or disputes, and industrial action. Thornton (1990) goes as far as to say that this form of advocacy can be construed as a means by which the dominant cultural group secures social control rather than a fairer and more egalitarian society. Further, the claimant is acting from a position of disadvantage because of the deficit view of her/him as the victim of the action against which she/he is protesting. In the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, advocacy procedures might embrace students claiming assessment processes represent unfair or irrelevant constraints, or workers claiming that they are discriminated against because of their position as adult literacy, language, and numeracy managers rather than as managers of historically accepted disciplines.

Lastly, the advocacy process is reactive instead of proactive, which has implications for the scope of change for social justice purposes. The legal obligation for examining the need for change within an organisation only arises when the policy can be clearly proven to be breached; otherwise, the policy does no more than recommend a direction for moral obligation in policy implementation and work practice. Changes in attitudes and relations within the system based on this advocacy process rely on the integrity with which that moral obligation is carried into all parts of policy-making, decision-making, and management:

> If the conduct were to be dealt with, it is believed that its favourable resolution would thereby effect a change in the heart and mind of the discriminator. Furthermore, it is believed that this methodology must have a ripple effect throughout the society and be conducive to the diminution of prejudice overall (Thornton 1990, 2)

For the inclusivity of advocacy to depend on the trickle-down effect of the moral obligation within an institution is not very efficacious, especially in the light of the claims for social justice that equal opportunity policy invokes.

In lieu of the claims made by the policy, the problems in equal opportunity advocacy procedures have important implications for workers in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, and for the expectations of students, especially those entering the system through the workplace. The limits that we have discussed raise issues about the nature of the institutional policy that will underlie advocacy procedures for students,

and for teachers advocating on their behalf in an inclusive system, and for the implementation of an inclusive curriculum for social justice purposes.

It is obvious that equal opportunity policy has made considerable changes to the make-up of the public face of the culture, and, to some degree, to the advocacy open to groups marginalised within the dominant culture. Certainly, individual lives may be redefined by greater participation in cultural institutions. But wider social change is limited by the process constructed for change and the conceptualisation of difference.

ISSUES INFLUENCING CURRENT PROVISION AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

Before moving on to examine responsibility and strategies for curriculum development, we believe that it is worthwhile to elaborate some particular characteristics of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. The historical nature of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision has led to certain expectations about the nature of decision-making and policy implementation, which often claim to address the needs of learners in terms of socially just outcomes.

Increasing attention to vocational adult literacy, language, and numeracy

Links have always been made between adult literacy, language, and numeracy development and the opportunities available to learners to improve their prospects. Many learners cite reasons of improved employment or promotion as a major motivation for entering classes.

National processes of award restructuring and industry reform have also paved the way for an increasingly close relationship between adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision and the chances available to learners to engage further in industry training. In the lead-up to International Literacy Year, 1990, and in the period since then, this vocational link has been more explicitly defined through Commonwealth initiatives tying adult literacy, language, and numeracy development to the receipt of government benefits, labour market programs, and/or improved access to workplace training.

Such links have the capacity to influence many aspects of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision:

- the content of available curricula
- who has access to adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs
- the availability and accessibility of programs for those not in the workforce or not seeking to enter the workforce

- articulation between existing programs
- the type of programs designed for those groups of people indicating that they might have special employment needs.

Decision-making in respect of these aspects will influence the what, when, where, and how of provision. While vocational and workplace adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision appears to have increased, there are not automatic increases in the opportunities that some learners are able to take up.

There is also continuing debate about the nature of literacy, language, and numeracy demands in the workplace and whether the current demands for higher order literacy skills currently reflect actual levels of communication competence required on the job (Luke 1992; Lankshear 1991).

We are unaware of recent research in Australia on the gendering of literacy and language skills in the workplace, but recent research by Butler and Connole (1992), and Poyton and Lazenby (1992) suggest that women's ways of 'knowing' (Belenky et al 1986), and 'doing' (Young 1990) may not be acknowledged by current training debates. Furthermore, while many recent reports on training (Finn 1991; and Mayer 1992) include equity promises:

> [t]hey do not contest the pre-existing structural gendering of the workplace, training and industrial relations systems and rely on employers to 'do the right thing' in accordance with legislation requirements for equal opportunities and affirmative action (Butler & Connole 1992, 24).

In the workplace, the same issues may apply equally but in different ways to men and women of cultures positioned outside the 'male, full-time, Anglo and technical' model used as the basis for Australian award restructuring (Butler & Connole 1992, 9). The implications for literacy, language, and numeracy provision are significant. If the pace of provision in the workplace continues, many of the social justice principles outlined in this project may be obscured by rhetoric that advocates a form of 'economic justice', which claims to equalise access to material resources and training while ignoring the structural inequities of the workplace.

How decisions are made, by and with whom, and in whose interests are central issues to be considered when establishing structural arrangements for workplace provision. The integrity with which educators, employers, and employees search for answers to these questions will be one element guiding the quality of emerging solutions.

Increasing accountability

As a result of a general influx of government and industry funds for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision, there is an increased expectation that outcomes will be more clearly defined, that placement, assessment, evaluation, and reporting procedures will be developed, and that national curriculum frameworks will prevail to provide a single, comprehensive picture of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning. These aspects of provision all demand increased accountability on the part of managers, educators, and learners in programs.

At the same time, there is an increasing number of politicised voices calling for an urgent re-examination of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. We believe that this response relates to the fact that the field has operated without a top-down bureaucratic structure until recently. Many of the voices come from groups that have been traditionally marginalised in the dominant cultural paradigm underlying formal adult literacy, language, and numeracy systems, and it is no surprise that they are being heard as that culture seeks to impose a bureaucratic structure over adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. The voices can be seen as an attempt from within the system to transform the tradition of bureaucratic structuring and power relations in a way that redefines positively the place of difference and values group specificity and participation.

The pressure to be more accountable for expenditure is problematic. In view of the previous questions raised about the nature of social justice, and the aims and purposes of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision, further questions need to be asked about the varied purposes of assessment, what assessment practices actually reveal, and how particular assessment purposes shape and prioritise teaching practices. Crucial to inclusive assessment procedures are ways of ensuring that members of particular social groups are not systematically positioned at lower levels in assessment practices, because their own knowledge and skills are marginalised in terms of the dominant cultural paradigm that underpins the system. It is equally important to consider the ways in which national systems will continue to offer the flexibility and diversity so commonly cited as hallmarks of adult literacy, language, and numeracy tuition.

Historical issues associated with adult literacy, language, and numeracy employees

Volunteerism has been a major source of labour in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field. In Australia until the late 1980s, learners could reasonably be said to volunteer for tuition, give or take the many anecdotal instances in which spouses or parents coerced learners to remain in programs. In the late 1980s and early '90s, however, the

introduction of government benefits tied to attendance in educational programs has shifted the emphasis from learner-initiated participation. Some learners still attend voluntarily; others attend under the promise of improved job opportunities and/or threat of loss of benefits. The latter has serious implications for an 'inclusive curriculum' that seeks to be relevant to learners' needs and is based on the assumption that learners will be actively engaged in their learning. It also complicates the inherent drive to 'meet needs' in the 1990s when learners' needs are being positioned with, or occasionally in opposition to, employer and government needs.

Practitioners have also been exposed to a degree of volunteerism in their labour. Volunteer literacy tutors have been used in many States to support, and, at times, carry the bulk of teaching in a program. In some States, volunteers are used as a source of labour to support the overall program. Volunteer input ranges from supporting paid teachers, who work with groups, to the more traditional concept of a volunteer who works with a student on a one-to-one basis in the student's home.

Provision has benefited greatly from the input of volunteers, but their recruitment, and, in some cases, subsequent promotion to paid work, has resulted in a disparate range of existing qualifications in the staffing profile of some provider institutions.

The Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) system, while using volunteers, has had a slightly different historical path in that professionalisation of the English-as-a-second-language (ESL) field occurred at a much earlier time—in the 1970s, rather than the mid-to-late '80s as was the case for adult literacy and numeracy staff. Consequently, access to staff with professional qualifications, and experience in systematically understanding their practice has been greater in AMES systems and some related areas of non–English-speaking-background (NESB) provision.

The consequences for this diversity of training are significant for current practice, and for the future support and development of curriculum and therefore policy-making. Staff may not have been exposed to practices that ensure sound theoretical and practical understanding of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning. Many AMES and NESB educators may have limited understanding of the connection between the different approaches to adult literacy, and numeracy learning of English language speakers and speakers of languages other than English. Many educators in general have limited understanding of, and training in, the teaching of numeracy in particular. Significant issues concerning curriculum development emerge from these varying forms of professionalisation in respect of the type of professional development required.

A further area of volunteerism involving questions for professionalisation concerns the large number of paid administrators who undertake advocacy

and support roles beyond the bounds of already demanding jobs. Anecdotal evidence abounds of full-time and part-time workers who are unable to cope with the demands of a field moving beyond infancy. They are struggling to keep abreast of theoretical and practical research in a rapidly expanding field, whilst they attempt to acquire professional credentials, which are becoming so necessary to maintain their position in the field and to continue to serve an advocacy role within systems often oblivious to the particular needs of literacy, language, and numeracy learners.

Another issue related to the professionalisation of the field and subsequent curriculum development has been the belief that:

> with a minimal amount of training anyone can teach an adult to read and write and thus, by the same token, to the view that anyone can teach the basic education components of labour market programs and other short courses aimed at specific groups in the population (Wickert & Zimmerman 1991, 200).

This belief has been supported by the use of minimally trained volunteers. In the 1990s, there is a clearer and more explicit emphasis on the role of volunteers within a system of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision that offers appropriate training and ongoing staff development to anyone engaged in the business of teaching in this field.

The most obvious characteristic of employees within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field has been the large number of women who have been employed particularly as volunteer tutors. Many of these women have come from primary-trained or secondary-trained backgrounds. In the 1980s, in particular, they saw the community literacy field as a means by which they might rejoin the workforce.

These people, predominantly women, have managed throughout the exploitation of their labour to maintain a visible, but not necessarily high, public profile for adult literacy. The extent to which this has been done in different States varies, as do the overarching philosophies and values promulgated within each of the States. It is to this latter point that we turn our attention, especially in terms of the unarticulated and covert beliefs that permeate curriculum practice in the privacy of literacy, language, and numeracy classrooms.

In much educational practice, the dysjunction between socio-cultural and economic profiles of learners and educators creates a number of tensions in terms of defining, valuing, and achieving educational outcomes. Within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, specific examples of this occur in Aboriginal education, and programs that attract women from non–English-speakin backgrounds. While many programs explicitly set out to address the articulated needs of community members, other

programs may be unaware of the significant differences in perspective that arise from differences in social background.

For the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, this is a major point of contention, which has little opportunity to be explored in most settings. This is due the part-time, contractual nature of employment conditions, and the limited opportunities for staff development that actively challenges existing beliefs and examines alternative perspectives on such issues as social groups, difference, and social justice and the pragmatic ways in which alternative perspectives might influence teaching.

Many analyses of literacy tuition focus on the problems experienced by learners and the specific communication strategies necessary to alleviate those difficulties. We suggest that some attention will need to be directed to the values and beliefs inherent in a largely middle class, feminised workforce. The nature of the workforce has contributed to its own exploitation, because of the belief that individual commitment to a 'literacy' cause in particular will overcome the structural inadequacies of existing provision. We are also mindful of the values and beliefs we bring to this project and the danger that our own cultural imperialism blinds us to issues and debates that we cannot foresee as academics somewhat removed from the literacy classroom.

The gendered nature of adult literacy, language, and numeracy and work requires that curriculum development initiatives address the potential controversies likely to emerge from historical developments that lead to significant differences between educator and learner groups.

SUMMARY

The adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, then, has a particular historical make-up to consider that largely consists of groups like women, and volunteers—groups that are marginalised traditionally within the dominant culture. These groups are faced with a number of issues:

- the structural outcomes from being an historically exploited labour force
- increasing pressure for accountability
- increasing tendency towards professionalisation, which at the same time marginalises the group that has no formal teaching qualifications.

The field is balancing these issues against the imposition of a bureaucratic structure, which reflects the dominant culture and is at times diametrically opposed to social justice claims of the institutions.

The development of inclusive policy for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision will necessitate directing attention towards the increase in vocationalism and accountability, and towards the limited tendency to acknowledge explicitly the gendered nature of literacy and language practices specifically, and the workplace generally.

Many marginal groups find it increasingly difficult in times of award restructuring to have their voices heard above economic rationalist demands for a distributive form of social justice that concentrates primarily on equalising access to training for effective participation in the status quo. The decision-making processes in train to enhance this form of social justice often require that members of marginalised groups engage in a preordained process of decision-making within the context of a 'universalised bureaucracy', which denies the dominant group's cultural specifity.

At the same time, however, this bureaucracy enshrines at the public (and political) face of the culture a seemingly homogeneous identity that is based on that dominant cultural grouping. The assimilationist nature of equal opportunity policy and affirmative action require that marginalised groups leave their group association at the margins, in their personal private life, in order to participate in the public political arena. Group affiliation is situated as the private, non-political face of the culture, while a public political infrastructure that purportedly transcends group difference is maintained. This sets up a dangerous dichotomy that marginalises those different from the 'universal' public paradigm and creates unreasonable demands to conform and to deny personal identity of all who participate in the public face of the culture. This is the current nature of the dominant paradigm underlying adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision.

Ideally, for the purposes of manifesting socially just provision, the entire decision-making process and the concomitant division of work responsibilities need urgent examination before an unwieldy bureaucratic structure becomes entrenched. If an inclusive system values difference and participation as positive forces for social change, then inclusive policy and the decisions underlying its implementation must dissolve the current dichotomy and situate group specificity in the public, political arena. As Young states: '[g]roups cannot be socially equal unless their specific experience, culture, and social contributions are publically affirmed and recognised '(1990, 174).

This tenet, applicable to any part of the culture that seeks transformation for social justice, is especially salient to the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field in respect of the promises it makes for socially just outcomes for its learners.

Many marginalised groups, such as women, Aborigines, people with disabilities, people from ethnicities other than that which dominates Australian society, and the aged, have turned away from assimilationist policy and have argued instead for policies that publicly celebrate their difference. In adult literacy, language, and numeracy, this has been reflected in the rise of exclusive provision for particular groups. This rise has reflected a policy change, at the local level in the main, firm in its intent but piecemeal in application, and lacking in resources and consistency at the wider system policy level.

Inclusive policy for education for social justice, then, needs to account for the particular historical background of the field of provision, the specificity of those who participate or would seek to participate, and the means by which those people are admitted to the organisation and invited to participate.

Decision-making is a fundamental component of the process by which marginalised groups might lay claim publicly to the material and social conditions necessary to achieve socially just outcomes. Work practices, the allocation of roles and responsibilities—including explicit lines of decision-making, representation, advocacy, and accountability—and understandings of cultural difference that move beyond assimilationist or universalising models are also necessary considerations in order to arrive at a policy that will underpin and pervade inclusive practice.

In essence, inclusive policy, as we have conceptualised it, will need to rethink significantly the fundamental aims and purposes of adult literacy, language, and literacy provision if it is to address some of the claims for social justice made by current providers. In this project, we have taken a particular view of social justice and the attendant responsibilities of an inclusive curriculum. Regardless of whether one agrees with our position, it can be argued generally that policy issues permeate all levels of educational practice. Consideration of policy and policy-making procedures must, therefore, be part of the debate about, and development of, curriculum in inclusive systems.

So what does inclusive decision-making and policy implementation for adult literacy, language, and numeracy look like in practice? The next chapter elaborates these decision-making components, and guidance for systems on the resource and management principles, which are necessary for the development of an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum designed to generate socially just educational practices.

CHAPTER 3: OPERATING INCLUSIVELY IN CLASSROOMS AND INSTITUTIONS

Throughout this document, we have emphasised the importance of inclusive policy as a framework for clarifying and articulating particular decisions that guide the development of an inclusive curriculum. Inclusive policy has at its core assumptions about ownership of the educational process, identification and allocation of responsibilities, and development of decision-making procedures, which acknowledge the material and social conditions necessary to support an inclusive curriculum. In this chapter, we outline educational and organisational action that will help to create and sustain an inclusive curriculum.

In the first section, we overview the curriculum development process. We reiterate the particular approach that we have taken to social justice and the inclusive curriculum and the subsequent implications this approach has for curriculum development.

The next four sections examine in detail classroom *and* organisational practices guiding curriculum implementation. Each of these sections examines existing 'good' practice and indicates how current adult literacy, language and numeracy practice is often associated with participation in the dominant culture. The discussion then extends practice beyond fair and enjoyable classroom experiences. It examines the necessary action that teachers and administrators might take to develop communication skills that are underpinned by the critical elements of literacy practice outlined by Lankshear (1991) and presented in chapter one of this document. Each section also describes existing good practice in institutions responsible for providing adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs and then extends the notion of good practice beyond fair treatment to examine the necessary support required to sustain inclusive curriculum teaching. Such a curriculum aims to provide opportunities to examine what 'participation in the status quo' means and to reveal possibilities of new forms of social participation.

Finally, we examine how guidance will impact on the training and development opportunities offered to *all* workers employed by providers of an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum.

In practice, the sections do not exist in isolation. They are integrated and act on each other to create conditions in which the curriculum is enacted.

While teachers are often seen as the key players in delivering the curriculum, it is our belief that this is an untenable position that leaves teachers in a vulnerable position, open to criticism about teaching outcomes that may be only marginally related to their input. 'Teacher as curriculum' beliefs draw attention away from the significant responsibilities of an individual organisation, such as a neighbourhood house, or a system, such as Correctional Services. With the emphasis on the individual and often charismatic powers of teachers, educational theorising ignores organisational structures, decision-making procedures, and work practices that determine in part the possibilities of working towards an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum for social justice. Therefore, these aspects must be addressed if 'good' teaching practices are to have any ongoing impact on student learning.

CREATING THE CURRICULUM

We have emphasised that curriculum development involves making selections about knowledge, skills, processes and procedures, prized values and attitudes, and ways of coordinating and completing the labour of curriculum development. Our belief is that inclusive curriculum practices will be most beneficial to those they claim to serve when these selections are made with a view to enhancing awareness about the potential choices involved in establishing relations of power between learners and those they with whom interact—be they family members, social friends, employers or employees of government agencies. With Lovat and Smith we believe:

> that the best decisions [about curriculum] will be those taken as follows:
> - deliberately
> - in a group process
> - identifying, in a critical manner, the possible alternatives
> - considering the consequences of choosing each alternative
> - making the choices explicit.
>
> There are key questions that we are answering in any curriculum work:
> - what knowledge (information, concept, skills, activities, feelings, norms, beliefs) is of most worth to this particular group of learners?
> - what tasks (activity/resource/content) are most effective in assisting the learners to learn this knowledge?
> - what is the most appropriate way to sequence these tasks?
> - what is the most appropriate way to organise (inter-relate) these tasks?
> - what is the most appropriate way to structure (provide instructions to complete effectively) these tasks?
> - how will I know when the learners have learnt the knowledge?
>
> (1990, 17, original emphases omitted)

We suggest that while such questions are an important beginning to the curriculum development process, an inclusive curriculum must position learners more publicly within the process that seeks answers to these

questions. In doing so, the process must also acknowledge the potentially conflicting answers that might be advocated by various stakeholders. Such a process must revise the idea of consultation and address the means by which different solutions to provision are privileged and prioritised. We discuss the consultative process in more detail in the section titled 'How the players interact' and have already flagged the issues surrounding representation in policy development in the previous chapter.

In chapter two, we discussed a number of trends and pressures acting on the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field. Among these are the pressure to develop a national curriculum framework and to standardise to a certain extent the means by which progress is measured. Many curriculum developments have been guided by these pressures to standardise, along with a national preoccupation with generic competences, and measurable and observable learning outcomes.

Our approach to curriculum development proposes that these trends be interrogated within the context of an inclusive curriculum as outlined in this project. To this extent, we would question the usefulness of prepackaged curriculum products which do the following:

- indicate a prescribed *process* for curriculum development
- prescribe curriculum *content* in isolation from the historical and political context of learning settings
- advocate singular *methodological approaches*.

Prescribing processes for curriculum development

This approach is most commonly associated with templates that describe in a step-by-step fashion the stages of curriculum development. In some examples, the steps incorporate essential consultative procedures necessary to collect the data that informs the writing of the curriculum. In other cases, the template makes assumptions about consultative procedures and presents no rationale for the manner in which content or activities are offered. Templates may incorporate a particular methodological approach while not being explicit about that approach or examining its applicability to various learning settings.

Prescribing content in isolation

Our approach to curriculum development assumes that curriculum content will be influenced by the aims and purposes of the course and participants in the course. We believe that an inclusive curriculum posits the idea that teachers' understandings of what they teach, and how, will be fine-tuned at the cutting edge in the classroom where both teachers and learners will be engaged in 'relearning' the content of the curriculum (Shor 1987, 101). This does not mean that we advocate the avoidance of any

preplanned curriculum content as a focus for particular courses. Rather, we suggest that content does not exist in isolation from its context and will be selected from a range of possibilities. The selections will be influenced by many things, including the purpose of the course, the client group, organisational needs, and arrangements for delivery, which involve length of course, contact periods, and accreditation issues.

Two processes of examination need to be part of describing curriculum content: first, how selections from the culture are made in the first place, and second, how those selections are transformed in the classroom into subject matter that is relevant, meaningful, and useful for the client group.

Prescribing singular perspectives on methodological issues

This approach is most commonly represented by curricula that advocate a particular methodological approach to delivery. Genre-based and competency-based curricula are probably the most common examples of the 1990s. In the early 1980s, language experience–based curricula were strongly advocated by literacy workers as an effective and relevant form of literacy tuition. Our resistance is not to particular methodological preferences. Rather, we believe that there are problems associated with curricula that are premised on singular approaches to learning when those approaches themselves are not examined for the educational values and beliefs they hold. In particular, we believe that the current preoccupation with competency-based curricula ignores the point that this is but one approach to learning and has itself been under considerable scrutiny as to its effectiveness (Jackson 1989).

Be it the process for writing the curriculum, the prescribed content, or the particular methodology that will drive the curriculum, we believe the intellectual stimulation and challenge evolving from debates about the 'what' and 'how' of curricula work are valuable foundations on which teachers base their classroom action. Admittedly, much previous adult literacy curricula work has been ad hoc and lacking in theoretical rigour (New South Wales TAFE Commission 1992). The adult literacy, language, and numeracy field is in great need of curriculum contributions that give provider organisations and teachers a headstart in understanding the multiplicity of ways in which learning can be organised. Teachers in particular need clear advice on how to use their often limited resources to arrive at plans for classroom action. But a common theme throughout this document has been the urgent need to engage learners and teachers in debates about what is actually done in class.

Currently, there is great pressure to determine the success or lack thereof of a course in terms of a preordained set of learning objectives. What often happens is that processes actually involved in negotiating the curriculum are sidelined in favour of predetermined objectives that drive learning outcomes.

Many of these learning outcomes are being linked to the national work of generic competences outlined in the Mayer Committee report (1992) and its follow-up report, *Putting general education to work* (Mayer 1992). These competences include the following:

- collecting, analysing, and organising information
- communicating ideas and information
- planning and organising activities
- working with others in teams
- using mathematical ideas and techniques
- solving problems
- using technology.

We believe that there is still some debate to take place regarding the existence and actual use of these competences in the workplace and other settings, but we also believe that many of these competences are inherent in the work of negotiating the curriculum. **Any curriculum development that takes seriously the notion of interactive learning and inclusivity outlined in this project will use the curriculum development process itself as a basis for identifying and improving competence in many of the above areas.**

This argument underscores a crucial aspect of curriculum development central to the critical model we propose here: the interconnectedness of the intellectual labour required to develop the curriculum and the practical labour associated with implementing and adapting the curriculum in situ. We have offered three examples of how prepackaged curricula need to be interrogated for the ways in which they accommodate or ignore the learner's needs as individuals and as members of social groups.

Given that the intellectual and practical labour of the curriculum are not isolated, a further aim of an inclusive curriculum is to incorporate alternative perspectives on social groups. Therefore, when one makes choices about course structure and content, consideration must be given to how issues of exploitation, marginalisation, and powerlessness are woven through the course. Van Dyke offers the following advice to guide this process particularly in relation to producing course material:

1 Making women, black people, people with disabilities, working-class people and lesbians and gay men visible in course material.

2 Avoiding the representation of women, black people, people with disabilities, working-class people and lesbians and gay men as problems.

3 Addressing gender, race, class disability and lesbian and gay issues.

4 Exploring and analysing inequalities based on gender, race, class, disability and sexual orientation.

5 Incorporating equal opportunities perspectives and critical awareness in course material (1990, 17).

We believe that these are issues that need to be considered long before the question of course materials arises, and, in fact, if these issues are not considered in the planning and structuring of a course, the different ways of knowing that may be offered run the danger of being slotted into the learning process as 'exotic' and superficial examples of cultural life. As such, they are unlikely to challenge learners' ideas about their existing beliefs and how they came to hold those beliefs in the first place.

Before moving on to such issues as the processes involved in enacting the curriculum, and the content, resources, and assessment procedures used, we will examine the place of evaluation in an inclusive curriculum.

Evaluation has not been identified in this document as a separate issue in the curriculum process. We made a conscious choice not to do this in order to reaffirm the idea that issues associated with evaluation must be attended to from the point of curriculum conception. This enables evaluation to address a number of central questions in the inclusive curriculum. Most forms of evaluation will want to ask: to what extent does the curriculum achieve the public aims and purposes offered as a rationale for the existence of the course?

In evaluation of an inclusive curriculum, we believe *these* questions should be asked:

- to what extent does this curriculum offer new perspectives on learning?
- to what extent is the learner profile different from the 'mythical norm' (Lorde 1992, 48)?
- to what extent are outcomes different from those commonly associated with courses designed for the 'mythical norm'?

This approach to evaluation questions whether objectives have been met and also to what extent these objectives have challenged conventional provision and produced outcomes that support a shift in awareness of, and action on, unequal relations of power. Inclusive evaluation must challenge from course inception the extent to which courses address specific needs of social groups, alternative perspectives on issues, and variety and relevance of learning outcomes.

In summary, we believe that inclusive curriculum development cannot afford to separate the sites at which fundamental struggles over meaning occur. If these sites are separated

then both teachers and learners are in danger of acting out a curriculum that has limited relevance and meaning for them and makes no contribution to the mission of the inclusive curriculum: that is, to explicitly address relations of power in educational settings so that learners are more easily able to identify how relations of power act on and within their lives beyond the wall of the classroom. This position means that conventional curriculum development departments will not support the inclusive curriculum we have outlined here, and that the positioning of teachers and learners as curriculum-makers is more likely to achieve inclusive aims within learning settings.

A number of texts describe in detail the variety of processes that encapsulate the work of curriculum development. In this section, we have focussed on a particular aspect of the process: decision-making and the division between the intellectual and creative labour that conceives of the curriculum and the purportedly practical and technical labour that implements the curriculum. We see these distinctions as false and counterproductive to the essence of an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum, in which communication skills of language, literacy, and numeracy are developed and used by learners to understand and act on relations of power in order to have a greater degree of awareness and control over social interaction.

We do not advocate that current curriculum development departments be disbanded. Rather, these departments need to acknowledge and incorporate the lived realities of teachers' work *within* documents detailing the curriculum process. To ignore this leaves teachers marginalised and disempowered as they wonder why a 'square curriculum' will not fit a 'round classroom'.

The following four sections expand on curriculum issues and how they might support inclusive curriculum development.

HOW THE PLAYERS INTERACT

Educator–learner interaction is at the heart of the adult literacy, language, and numeracy process. This section addresses factors affecting the educator–learner interface, but we recognise that to be effective, inclusive teaching and learning for social justice must take place in a system that values difference and uses that difference as a positive force for educational and social change. The six principles underpinning an inclusive system are a reminder of the focus of educational work for social justice. We reiterate their importance here as part of an overall policy framework to drive curriculum development.

Classroom practice

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy teaching approaches have been referred to previously in this document and they form the basis of many productive learning experiences. Good teaching approaches include how teachers cater for individual difference, how they negotiate what learners will learn by negotiating curriculum content, and how they negotiate ground rules and routines with group members by being cognisant of group process and the overlap between individual and group purposes. Ennis et al describe this as follows:

> Group Process means:
> WHAT is done in the group, ie., the *tasks* that individuals or the group want to achieve,
> HOW things are done in the group including how the task is achieved, how decisions are made, how the *group is maintained*, how individuals interact with each other and
> WHAT tasks are selected and why the group is maintained. Individual and group *needs* drive the maintenance of the group and determine the tasks.
>
> As these three aspects of group life interact continually, tutors need to balance the emphasis and appropriateness of each at different times. Certain behaviour assists in accomplishing the tasks whilst other behaviour is required to build relationships in the group and maintain the group as a working unit. The trick is to accomplish the task in such a way as to simultaneously build relationships in the group and maintain the group as a cohesive unit.
>
> **Getting the task done requires:**
> - Initiation—defining the task, providing ways and ideas for getting started,
> - Knowledge, information and opinion giving and seeking—facts, past experiences, opinions, resources. Stating beliefs, and suggesting ideas. Asking and supporting others to do the same,
> - Co-ordination—linking information and ideas, relating these to group or individual goals,
> - Clarification—interpreting and expanding ideas and information to the group. Restating and ordering information to clear confusion,
> - Evaluation and summarising—gauging where the group or individual is in relationship to goals. Providing the whole view. Offering a conclusion on what has been achieved and what remains to be done.
>
> **Maintaining the group requires:**
> - Norm setting—helping to set ground rules,
> - Encouraging—accepting that others' contribution is worthwhile,
> - Gatekeeping—keeping communication open and fair, allowing all group members to have a turn,
> - Harmonising—reconciling or mediating disagreements whilst assisting group members to explore and understand differences,
> - Compromising—adapting and modifying ideas,
> - Expressing feelings—expressing your feelings and encouraging others to express theirs. Development of an understanding of different feelings and reactions (1988, 19).

We believe that 'good teaching practice' requires that teachers do the following:

- clarify and justify the purposes for learning
- assist learners to meet their articulated goals
- introduce alternative perspectives and issues
- set individual learning programs
- where relevant, identify goals associated with employer or other institutional expectations
- develop learning programs that integrate individual goals with the goals of other members of the class and with wider goals perhaps unarticulated at the time of enrolment or alternatively articulated through employers expectations during the learning process.

Inclusive adult literacy, language and numeracy teaching and learning has an explicit aim of working for educational and social change to redress the current balance of inequitable relations of power between certain individuals and groups. This type of curriculum has characteristics additional to those encompassed within a curriculum of good practice. An inclusive curriculum at its core is about ensuring that all learners are accepted and supported in their efforts to develop and exercise their capacities to realise choices, and act upon those choices. But the inclusive curriculum is also underpinned by a belief that in the wider social world not all learners are accepted and supported in their efforts to live as they might choose. The inclusive curriculum strives to balance the discrimination, exploitation, and marginalisation of daily life with an educational environment that provides time and space to examine, understand, and plan action to counter inequality.

In essence, inclusive classroom practices:

- **are explicit about educational and social change as a purpose of classroom learning**
- **do not offer false promises about the potential magnitude of individual or social change**
- **explicitly examine and exploit differences between members of the learning group**
- **do not accept behaviour or language that oppresses or stereotypes group members**
- **recognise that different power relations exist between members of the group as individual personalities and as members of commonly identified social groups (prisoners, Aborigines, or people with disabilities, for example)**

- **examine individual power relations between learners in the context of wider social relations**
- **give each person a position from which to speak while not privileging individual views above those of others.**

Teachers, institutions, and systems have a major responsibility in establishing learning contexts that use difference as the basis of productive learning experiences. Students also have an important part to play in this. In this project we acknowledge that not all adult learners will enter the classroom with equal confidence or communication skills. A shared and explicit aim of an inclusive classroom, however, is to develop and nurture a sense of responsibility for individual learning goals and/or individual goals that support development of cultural groups. This latter point is often more relevant for particular cultural groups whose group orientation is stronger than an individualist orientation—a case in point being Aboriginal people living in remote communities.

We would argue that a further responsibility of students is to contribute to the operation of the classroom as a site where cooperation, negotiation and challenging of the status quo are common activities.

To this end, students are encouraged in these ways:

- **to clarify their learning goals with the educator**
- **to take risks with differences in communication and learning styles—both the teacher's and other learners'**
- **to work with other members of the group to expand their own capacity to learn**
- **to share background experiences and to be willing to take risks in revealing their beliefs and social circumstances, and to support other learners to do the same**
- **to recognise that they are able to direct and control the course of their learning**
- **to offer feedback to the teacher and other learners regarding the success or otherwise of their learning**
- **to work towards acknowledging their individual assumptions and biases in regard to other individuals and social groups**
- **to challenge and analyse their own and others' conceptions of 'difference' and where that stands in comparison to prevailing social norms.**

In addition, there are other things students may be encouraged to do:

- ask questions when in doubt or needing information
- attempt to respond to questions posed by the teacher or other learners
- take the initiative or respond to requests to bring resources to use as the basis of learning.

It is our belief that these are important strategies that assist learners to gain greater control over their learning. These are also strategies, however, that are alien and culturally unacceptable to some groups. While we would encourage working towards these goals, teachers may need to 'relearn' (Shor 1987, 101) the relevance and usefulness of many of these strategies as they extend their work with particular client groups.

Teachers are seen as the public face of adult literacy. To the community and to the students, teachers are often seen to have powers and responsibilities far beyond what they actually possess. For many students to whom we spoke, teachers *are* the curriculum.

Throughout this document, we have noted that systems have a large role to play in supporting teachers to do their job effectively, but the day-to-day decisions individual teachers make are critical factors in students' learning. Teachers continually have to make judgements about how to engage with students in critical practice. Teachers have particular responsibilities in regard to the following:

- the content of courses
- the resources used
- the methodology and mode of presentation
- the social and intellectual ethos of the classroom
- the language used in the classroom
- the acceptability of times and venues to a certain extent
- ensuring their own professional development keeps them up-to-date with institutional and education knowledge
- acting as advocates for students within the decision-making processes of the institution
- ensuring or advocating for student representation within the committee process (for example, for workers to be represented in industry discussions on provision).

Many of these responsibilities are shared with students, course coordinators, curriculum writers, administrators, and various government bodies, and it should not be incumbent on teachers to feel they that have to meet all

of these responsibilities all of the time. Priorities have to be set and decisions made as to the manner in which individual teachers might best expend their energies and expertise.

In summary, both educators and learners need to accept responsibility for speaking out and listening to the views of others, and engaging critically in task and maintenance functions of the group (see Ennis et al 1988). Teachers in particular need to ensure that all members of the class have the opportunity to voice their opinions on group and individual learning processes.

It is not the sole responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the inclusive curriculum is in place or that it works. Institutions and systems are clearly responsible for the overarching framework within which teachers' inclusive practices operate. Teachers clearly have a role, however, in informing their managers about the adequacy with which organisational arrangements enable them to address learning needs. This will be so of teachers regardless of their positions as workplace, community, or TAFE workers.

Institutional practice

Within the various adult literacy, language, and numeracy systems (community, labour market, correctional services, TAFE, private providers), democratic education and management procedures are often advocated. These procedures are based on principles of participation, negotiation, committee processes that include representation from a range of stakeholders, and explicit structures defining educational and organisational decision-making and lines of communication. Additionally, adult literacy, language, and numeracy systems invariably promote equal opportunities for those people who work within the institutions. The rhetoric of such claims is not always evident in practice, however, and this is no more evident than in the adult literacy field where women as workers make up the majority of staff at lower levels in the field but have still to redress the highly gendered nature of many systems' staffing profiles at management and policy levels.

Inclusive institutions working for social justice have additional characteristics that are underpinned by the six principles of an inclusive system that are outlined in chapter two and beliefs about social justice detailed in chapter one. Such institutions must ensure that decision-making processes move beyond democracy, which, in some cases, may fall short of equitable practice and can be driven by policy decisions supported by 51% or less of decision-makers. These decision-makers may not be representative of groups who bear the brunt of carrying out decisions, or alternatively may not represent groups who are purported to receive benefits arising from the decisions.

We believe the nature of decision-making procedures are central to the overall approach taken in enacting inclusive curriculum, and for this reason, we outline below some aspects of decision-making likely to support inclusive provision. **Institutions that are sincere in their attempts to have honest representation of, and subsequent action on, the range of ideas about the adult literacy, language and numeracy needs of individuals and particular social groups must do a number of things:**

- **provide information on how decisions are made within the context of the institution, its structure, and its mission**
- **adopt strategies within the decision-making process to review manager and educator assumptions that underlie procedures and decisions**
- **examine how procedures might silence particular voices during the decision-making process**
- **make procedures and structures accessible to people participating in debate**
- **be explicit about how structures assist this**
- **within the bureaucratic structure, identify people and positions that are actually accountable for the degree to which decision-making procedures are successful in addressing community needs.**

The latter point is crucial to accountability and reaffirms to the point that people, not structures, make decisions. For too long in conventional organisations, decisions have been communicated in top-down fashion as though the decisions are disconnected from the set of values and beliefs held by the organisation or its employees and as though there is no possibility of contesting the proposed action. The increasing tendency to develop a bureaucratic and uniform structure for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision suggests that accountability for particular decisions should indicate more clearly the relationships between the decision, the principles driving provision, and the claims for social justice inherent in much of the work of this field.

Institutions striving for inclusive practice will need to provide professional development opportunities at appropriate times in teachers' careers to enable them to contribute effectively to curriculum debates within their institutions and systems. These points are examined more fully in a later section, which discusses training and development in inclusive institutions.

We have outlined a number of requirements for decision-making that assist in enacting the inclusive curriculum. Institutions will need to promote

the belief, which is enacted through practice, that teachers and other employees are actually capable of representing ideas and alternative views through their organisation's decision-making procedures. This can be done by providing training and development that increase employees understandings of the following:

- organisational management
- inclusive practices
- group dynamics
- organisational participation.

The details of this training will need to be underpinned by principles that do the following:

- frame the concept of 'representatives' for particular social groups as two-way channels for information and ideas likely to affect decision-making processes
- encourage 'hands off' consultation designed to be informed by 'listening to' rather than 'speaking at'
- acknowledge that representatives bring individual, corporate, and social affiliations to the consultative process and that there may be tensions and dilemmas associated with resolving conflict arising from each of these 'positions'
- acknowledge that debates about provision occur within organisational structures that often unwittingly suppress discussion of difference, and that more often than not the structures should be debated as well as the arriving at decisions about particular types of provision.

Decision-making procedures therefore require explicit attention to how to make individual and group voices heard and to the skills required to shift talk of social justice and inclusivity to a space that clearly foregrounds relational rather than distributional aspects of educational provision.

In essence, this requires that the very basis of top-down management be challenged for the way in which it obscures particular educational needs and silences possibilities for action beyond existing practices that often take for granted their democratic representative nature.

These kinds of consultative procedures aimed at generating socially just provision necessarily involves certain things:

- time
- effort
- funding to support adequate consultation

- willingness to hear the voices
- willingness to move beyond conventional ways of decision-making
- an intention to link decision-making procedures and principles in adult literacy, language, and numeracy to other work in the organisation.

Consultation about provision means that learners must be asked to contribute their understandings of what often appear to be peripheral factors affecting learning. These factors may include some of the following, which were raised during consultations for this project:

- classes do not correspond to transport schedules and therefore result in periods of one to two hours' delay, which makes attendance at a two-hour class impractical
- child care is either unavailable, or available but not accessible or financially viable
- administrative staff are not aware or are intolerant of communications difficulties experienced by many adult literacy, language, and numeracy learners
- lifts or ramps are not available for people with physical disabilities or those people unable to walk up flights of stairs for reasons of fitness
- in correctional services institutions available courses may not match immediate needs and interests, or may not reflect possible opportunities for prisoners once released
- workplace provision enables learners to sustain more readily study, work, and family commitments because of two things: the ease of access to classes during work time and the ready availability of a learning setting in the workplace
- prayer space is unavailable for those with religious commitments
- canteens and food outlets have food that is often unpalatable, expensive, and caters largely to conservative tastes.

A broad view of curriculum and the social nature of literacy learning requires that systems take on board the minutiae of provision that actually influence whether anyone turns up for class. Attention to this detail also ensures that learners who are enrolled in classes remain enrolled, rather than their leaving because of what appear to be factors peripheral to their learning.

Ways of prioritising and valuing factors that influence participation must be viewed without cultural blinkers that might suggest, for example, that

transport difficulties are not a good enough reason to prevent a 'really motivated' learner from attending classes.

The key point to remember in undertaking consultations in the classroom is that the classroom is not the site where many of these changes can be addressed. **With regard to the setting up of consultative processes in classrooms, this project makes the assumption that decision-making processes within the institution exist to implement changes geared towards two things: first, increasing the number of opportunities available for learners to improve their capacities to operate in and on the world, and second, increasing the breadth of provision with a view to providing different kinds of learning experiences.**

Specific action emerging from classroom consultations about provision will be informed by locality and by demographic characteristics of the population served by the institution. There will be certain processes that enhance an institution's ability to act on consultation. Most of these processes have been outlined previously in this section, and they presume sincerity, integrity, and honesty underpin the consultative process. Such processes have the potential to create a more cohesive learning group if the educator has the skill to bring the group together to achieve individual goals, the goals of the group, and those goals identified as central to an education for social justice.

The major change required, however, is that institutions be prepared to engage with learners in debates about how their learning might proceed most effectively, 'debate' being the operative word. Clearly, there are a range of professional development issues that will affect how staff implement the results of institutional processes of consultation. These are explored more fully in the section on training and development.

Furthermore, institutional structures and funding arrangements need to take account of what is required for students to understand and learn the democratic processes and procedures of the institution as part of the adult literacy, language, and numeracy process. While some may consider that these processes are irrelevant to adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning, the processes in themselves involve the development of competencies often identified by learners, educators, and employers as essential for participation in society. What appears to be problematic is the issue of the context in which they are taught and the degree of transferability of competencies to other contexts.

This discussion provides only a partial view of institutional and classroom processes central to the ways in which teachers engage in and argue for particular classroom conditions. The issues we present influence the

quality of debates about curriculum development and the extent to which systemic factors will address the needs of an inclusive curriculum.

The many institutional procedures that we have noted are essential to developing inclusive curricula because they form the basis of so many decisions about what is taught, how it is taught, when and where, by whom, and for what purposes. Input at the planning level is crucial, but that input is of little use unless bureaucracies hear and acknowledge the significance of what often appear to systems to be superficial issues.

VALUING KNOWLEDGE: MAKING SELECTIONS FROM 'THE' CULTURE

Classroom practice

The content of adult literacy, language, and numeracy involves more than gaining English-language skills, learning to read and write, and becoming numerate. Aware teachers see themselves as helping learners to involve themselves in the process of making meaning through the vehicle of literacy. Good practice has often conceived of meaning-making as individualistic: 'what does this mean to me?' 'how is this relevant to my life?' It has also had as a central goal the equipping of learners to participate more fully in society and to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy.

While this may be a laudable approach in a socially just society, where there is economic or social oppression it is unlikely to advantage or change for the better the lives of those who sit outside the dominant culture. Commonly, adult literacy, language, and numeracy learners are individuals who are outside this culture and are therefore disadvantaged by the very society in which they are being asked to participate. Further, where content and learning resources are individualistically conceived, the realities of groups, difference, and oppression are disguised.

An inclusive curriculum that is committed to social justice includes content, experiences, and resources that encourage learners to challenge the status quo. For example, language classes might incorporate critical analysis of the mechanisms by which histories of workers and employers are produced and reproduced (see McCormack 1992).

If knowledge is socially constructed, then the content of adult literacy, language, and numeracy teaching must go beyond individual meaning-making to consideration and exploration of how understandings of social groups are produced or conservatively reproduced through the law, media, history,

as well as through health, education, and welfare services. This will mean that not only will teachers use resources that allow exploration of these areas, but they will help learners find ways to examine these critically. Chapter four provides examples of how teachers can use the content of resources for inclusive practice.

Institutional practice

Currently, adult literacy, language, and numeracy providers aim to achieve the following:

- provide equal access for all students
- offer a variety of provision
- meet the needs of individual learners
- provide some specialised courses and settings for particular groups.

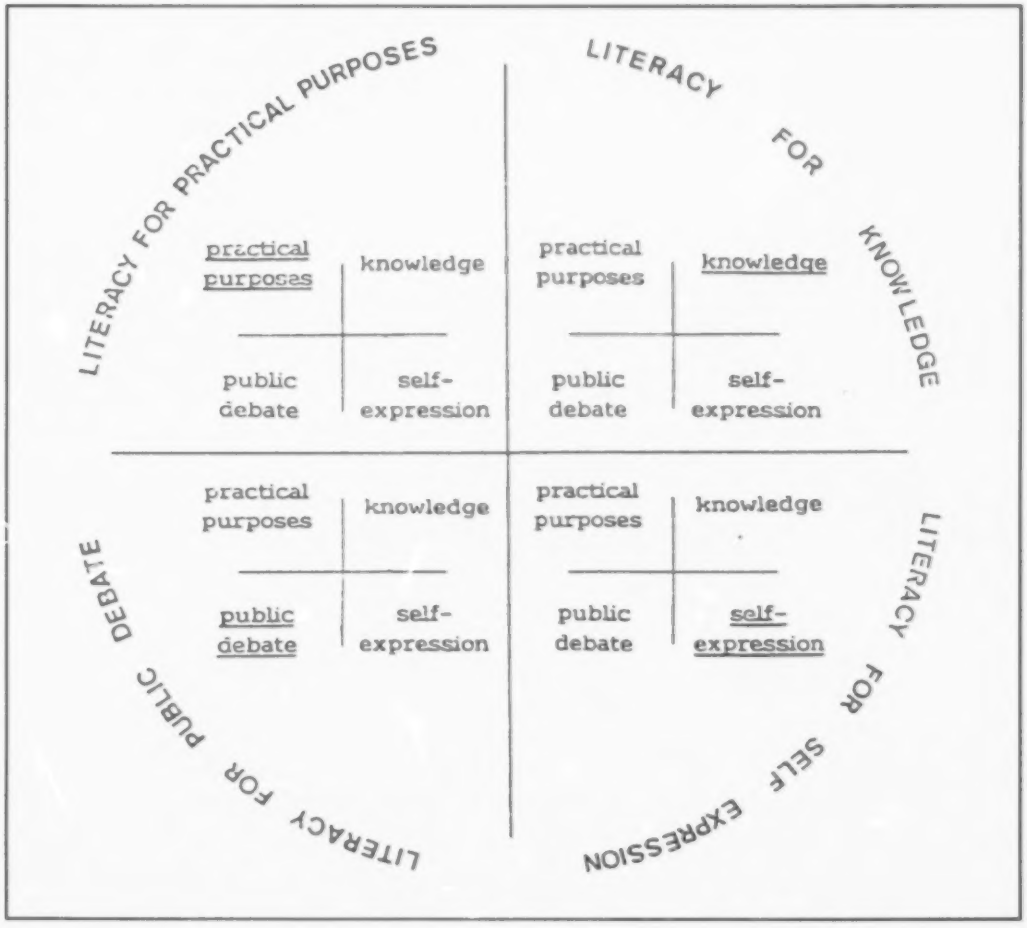
Systems that are committed to inclusive curricula and education for social justice will recognise that equal access does not ensure equal outcomes. Once this is acknowledged, provision can be targeted to meet the need of individuals and groups including indigenous peoples, non–English-speaking-background learners, women, a variety of age groups, and people with disabilities.

Variety of provision in an inclusive sense still includes the critical examination of knowledge claims at the classroom level but seeks to go beyond critical examination of knowledge claims. It will provide opportunities for learners to do the following:

- work in exclusive settings with groups with whom they culturally identify; for example, groups such as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders may feel that only in institutions that allow them to meet away from white society can they adequately explore their own culture; non–English-speaking-background learners or people with disabilities may be better served at sites that are designed and equipped to take account of their particular needs
- work in courses especially orientated to explore unique histories and cultures; this may be desirable for any marginalised group whose histories, literature, and sociology has been largely ignored in mainstream curriculum
- explore specialised subjects within courses; this might include the possibility of topics such as Aborigines and health, youth and the law, women's writing groups
- meet with groups in the institution with whom they identify; these might require the provision of rooms or timetable flexibility to enable groups to meet on their own—a study room for mature-age students might be an example of this.

Some of this kind of provision exists at present, but it is often marginalised and undervalued. It often occurs informally outside of accredited courses and is viewed as something 'nice' to do. Institutions need to meet the challenge of seeking accreditation of these courses, classes, and structures wherever they occur. Students must have articulated pathways if their learning is to work for them within educational systems. On the other hand, institutions need to involve themselves in discussion and planning with stakeholders to ensure that formalised processes of articulation and accreditation do not confine and limit the officially sanctioned learning to that which is generally valued by the status quo.

In the efforts to consider articulation and accreditation issues, institutions must be on guard against cultural imperialism inherent in the way literacy is conceptualised and defined. Consider the diagram below, which is taken from volume one of the *Draft competence statements for adult reading and writing*:



(Adult Basic Education Accreditation Framework Project 1992, 12)

It may be that not all cultural groups value equally all four of the defined literacy areas. The question has been raised as to whether 'literacy for personal expression' may be used as a force, albeit unwittingly, to construct identity. This is not to say that such attempts to analyse literacy should be abandoned but rather that we need to be aware that any effort to construct components of literacy may reflect the view of the dominant culture.

Further, in order that critical content within adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum exist, there must be professional development available that provides information and resources that critically examine how history, social systems, and the media impact on groups and individuals in Australian society. Too often, teachers have had to spend hours of personal time informing themselves. **This process of reading, learning and collecting resources as part of the professional development of teachers needs to be supported, acknowledged, and valued in tangible and practical ways.**

ASSESSMENT

Classroom practice

Existing good practice in adult literacy, language, and numeracy assessment advocates using assessment procedures that have these characteristics:

- assessment is associated with identifiable changes in individual competence
- implementation is in such a way that it does not threaten students
- claims are explicit about what has been learned rather than what has not been achieved
- a continuous profile of social and academic achievements is provided
- the process is informative of teaching and learning processes rather than being judgemental about individual achievements.

As Kemmis and Stake note, currently assessment commonly refers to:

> measuring and judging the quality of learner performance; . . . The goal of assessment is to put a value on the achievement of students; its focus is the achievement of learners, individually or in groups (1988, 17)

Within an inclusive classroom, any process of judging achievements must examine relations of power operating between educators and learners in addition to their relations with those who receive and/or act on reports or accounts of the assessment process. Inclusive classroom assessment will be based on the principles of good assessment practice. In addition, inclusive assessment in the classroom will share results and the procedures

by which these results are reported. This must be done in an environment that enables students to understand these things:

- the reasons for particular assessment practices
- how assessment measures are achieved
- the various purposes for that assessment
- what assessments say about academic and social growth
- what types of growth might be excluded from particular assessment practices
- implications of assessment results for future decisions about study and work
- the uses to which measures will be put
- the implications of making assessment results available to other agencies such as CES.

It is also necessary for reporting mechanisms to make explicit the potential for students to be limited in further adult literacy, language, and numeracy *use* as a result of discriminating practices on the part of employers or other agencies. Performance on a literacy scale may have nothing to do with performance in practice if one is black, female, has a disability or a criminal record and is seeking information or employment in an unconventional field.

This is an issue that can be foregrounded during the actual learning process. The curriculum category of 'personal development' or 'literacy for self-expression' is crucial in providing a forum for students to engage in debates about how they might challenge existing assessment procedures. Learners may also collude, however, to render their strengths invisible within conventional assessment practices. Cox and Leonard (1991) and Windsor (1991) provide useful examples of this related to the issue of skills audits Their work is important in providing practical examples of how some women in particular collude in the process of marginalising the relevance and usefulness of domestic skills that they have refined in the home.

Institutional practice

Educational institutions have always measured learner success. Traditionally, measurement processes have favoured the capacities of successful learners. Assessment is often in written form and associated with time spent in a course. Although there is some shift in thinking about assessment practices, policy and practice are to a large degree influenced by conventional wisdom about 'testing'.

The inclusive classroom practices described in the previous section must ensure that assessment procedures do not create a sense of powerlessness

in individuals. Learners generally have limited autonomy over which achievements are measured, how that measurement takes place, and for what purposes the assessment results are used. Teachers can involve students in this process and therefore give them more control in negotiating classroom-based assessment. Where assessment is prescribed to teachers, however, and/or the use of the assessment information is decided without consultation, teachers themselves are rendered powerless. When the intellectual labour of creating assessment practices is separated from the labour of completing and analysing achievements, there is a potential disjunction between aims, purposes, and consequences of assessment practices.

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy providers and universities have a role to play in establishing research and development opportunities to penetrate the mass of inappropriate theorising that often informs assessment procedures. This theorising is often based on conceptions of child development, ignores relations of power inherent in the assessment process, and, in the current political and economic climate, privileges economic imperatives and tangible achievements at the expense of prior life experience and social growth.

Furthermore, providers and universities must recognise the potential of organisational decision-making processes to revitalise and re-vision many existing assessment practices. Ideally, an inclusive curriculum is aimed at generating inclusive social practices as the democracy of the classroom permeates social interaction beyond the classroom walls. Therefore, decision-making procedures about assessment must be informed by a range of principles and practices.

It is appropriate to develop different assessment procedures to account for particular learning purposes and needs. This is obviously a consideration in the assessment of spoken and written language. Social group affiliation and workplace environment are two aspects that may significantly change the actual skills required to achieve competence in specific contexts.

A key point of the debate here is the issue of standards and the notion that standards are not isolated sets of criteria identifying levels of achievement. In practice, standards are associated with ways and means of getting jobs done. They are contextual. They are linked to social group affiliation. The achievement of certain standards is also supported or undermined by the degree of collaboration associated with doing the job in question, and like assessment in the classroom, achievement may be unrelated to academic ability.

Social group affiliation influences stakeholder debates about standards because different stakeholders will bring to the debate their own ideas about what knowledge and skills are valuable and the most appropriate

ways in which these are demonstrated. For example, if adult literacy, language, and numeracy assessment is linked to workplace practices, that assessment must reflect actual workplace demands, rather than the academic skills conventionally deemed as reflective of employment or training potential. Assessment of these skills is most usefully done by using resources and procedures used in the workplace.

It is tempting to see competency-based assessment as providing an inclusive solution. Here the skills required to perform a given job or task are analysed, and when the student can demonstrate that skill or set of skills, she or he has met the criteria. It seems equitable to all. Since people bring to the educational process a set of cultural baggage, however, there is always the problem of seeing some tasks as more valuable than others and of defining the proper performance of those tasks in narrow terms. It is important that a variety of ways of 'doing' (Young 1990) is valued as well as other ways of 'knowing' (Belenky et al 1986). Competency-based assessment, for example, must take into account the range of technology available to support people with disabilities to ensure that they are not excluded from opportunities on the basis of perceived deficits that are unrelated to their ability to achieve.

It is also important to acknowledge that some learning outcomes that may be prescribed in a competency-based system may appear deceptively simple if one is a member of the dominant culture. Take, for example, the 'learning outcome A' adapted from the *TAFE national communication module: work team communication* of the National Communication Skills Project shown below.

Learning outcome A

Participate in a small group discussion to reach agreemant on a workplace-related issue.

Performance criteria

- Personal views are presented in a way that supports the views of others involved in the discussion.
- Appropriate meeting procedures are adhered to.
- Information is conveyed in a logical, clear, and concise manner.
- Specified follow-up steps are taken.

Assessment

The participant will demonstrate competency by:

- participating in a small group discussion to address a workplace-related issue
- outlining the proposed follow-up steps.

(after 1992, 3)

If one is a professional, middle class, Anglo male, this task may be very basic. If one is a Vietnamese woman of non–English-speaking background in a largely male discussion group, participation may be more difficult. Is it possible to consider their cultural difference when assessment is simply judged on a 'yes, the student did it' or 'no, the student did not do it' basis?

There are a number of implications for educators, institutions, government agencies, and employers if issues such as these are to offer understandings about how to overcome the biases inherent in existing assessment frameworks.

Connell (1988) notes that generally average working-class children appear as less capable and knowledgeable than others when assessed within a framework that supports a competitive academic curriculum. Integrating teaching styles with particular *learning preferences* has some merit, although we have already pointed out that it is important for learners to be exposed to a range of ways of learning. Connell's comments suggest that *assessment preferences* should be given some consideration in developing profiles of learners' achievements.

The challenge in adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum is to develop and sustain assessment procedures that do not systematically assess as deficit those outside what Connell describes as a 'capitalist, professional, male, Anglo' system (1988, 68). Even where innovative new curricula or curricula frameworks are developed, there may be assumptions made that sift inclusive learning through assessment practices that select capacities and knowledge inherently reflective of prevailing norms.

Most important to the assessment procedure is recognition that 'marking' and measuring are done against standards. These standards may be implicit and not revealed to learners. In an inclusive system, these standards are revealed not only to learners and teachers but also to employers and other providers who may be unaware of the ways in which they unwittingly exclude or marginalise individual potential and thereby reduce the gains to individuals and organisations.

Standards associated with assessment may be culturally inclusive, or alternatively, they may inherently sort out and exclude those who do not possess characteristics of dominant groups. To ensure standards are inclusive, a process must be established that ensures that the assessment procedures are reviewed and that asessment results are open for moderation by interested parties.

Institutional assessment practices will to a certain extent determine how the micro processes of negotiation, collaboration, and identification of different needs during classroom learning are actually reflected in how

that learning is assessed and reported. Institutional practices will to a large extent influence the capacity for adult literacy, language, and numeracy providers to develop an educational climate that enables learners to express their experience and capabilities, and to have some degree of control over their actions and the consequences of these actions. Young (1990) describes these two aspects of social interaction as crucial to a socially just society.

RESOURCES

Just as planning processes, content, and assessment are key elements of a curriculum, the resources used in classrooms are integral to an educational process that is relevant and challenging. In many cases, existing quality adult literacy, language, and numeracy resources:

- reflect an orientation relevant to adult lives and concerns
- are able to address the diverse range of learner abilities
- are written in simple English
- reflect a sound understanding of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning
- acknowledge the complexity and non-linear development of adult language learning
- are appropriate in format and illustration.

Classroom practice

The following table of criteria for good resource practice appeared in *ARIS Bulletin* in 1991, and we believe that it offers useful advice on preparing or choosing resources for classroom use.

Criteria for good adult basic education resources

Methodology

- Materials should support the methodology and teaching approach(es) used.
- Materials should support the curriculum or course content you are teaching.
- Material should combine theory and practice. The methodological base of the resource should be linked to the student material.
- Materials should encourage student interaction.
- Materials should act as a catalyst for student work and investigation.

Content

- The content of materials should be holistic and integrated (eg maths/literacy/science)
- Materials should be meaningful to adult students (based on prior knowledge or ideas and language discussed before students are presented with the material)
- Material should be relevant to adult students in terms of educational needs, functional needs, interest, or personal development.
- Materials should be culturally appropriate or sensitive.
- Materials should be capable of challenging and extending students.
- Materials should use language that is not artificially contrived.
- Reading materials should be complete (not fragments).
- Materials should be flexible and be able to be adapted to different situations.
- Materials should be current and up-to-date.

Accessibility

- Materials should be readily available.
- Materials should be within budget.

Presentation

- Presentation and layout of materials should be appropriate to the type of material.
- Material should be teacher-friendly—it should be easy for teachers to identify which are notes to teachers, discussions of the theoretical base, or student worksheets and exercises.
- The materials should be adult and non-patronising in print, appearance, format, readibility, graphics.

Collection of resources

- Materials should be varied to cover a range of pruposes (taking into account the range of information that must be computed and read in a day).
- Materials should promote the development of listening, speaking, and critical thinking as well as maths, reading, and writing.
- The collection of materials should cover a range of formats—print, video, audio, computer and concrete.
- Within a collection, materials should offer a range of structures eg modules, single lesson, or capable of being used over a number of lessons.

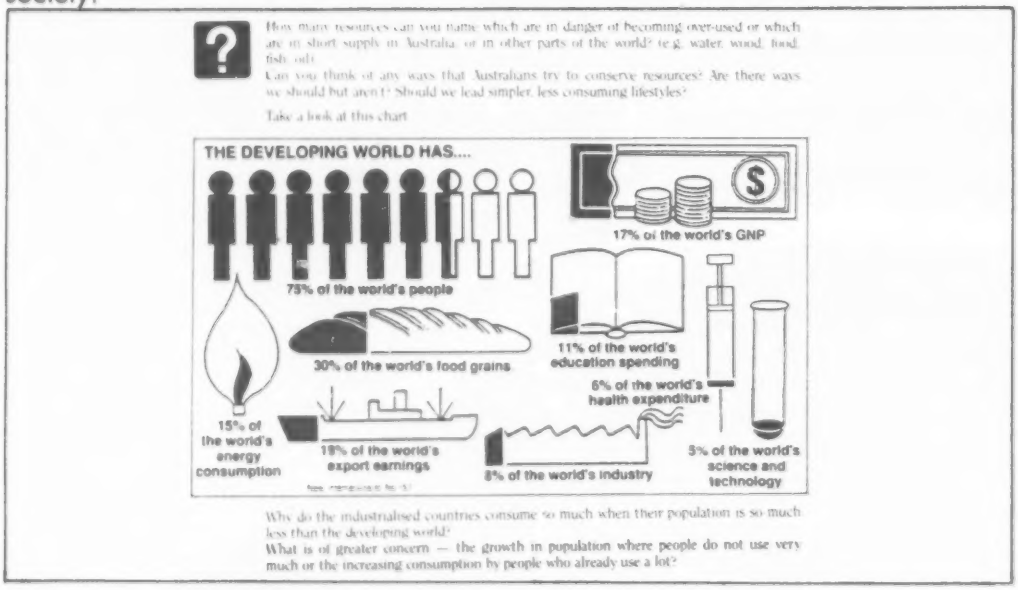
80 (after *ARIS Bulletin*. 2 (4): 12-13)

Inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy resources incorporate these characteristics. They also use language and illustrations that avoid stereotypes, or alternatively, they challenge existing stereotypes and pose problems about the ways in which those stereotypes have come to be used and accepted.

I GET ON FINE WITH ASIANS - THERE IS ONE IN THE SHOP DOWN THE ROAD AND HE'S ALWAYS CHARMING TO ME
I WOULDN'T MIND MY DAUGHTER MARRING A BLACK MAN BUT WHAT ABOUT PROBLEMS THEIR CHILDREN WILL FACE
OF COURSE THEY CAN LEARN ABOUT THEIR OWN CULTURES BUT THEY NEED TO LEARN ENGLISH AND FIT IN HERE
Can you think of ways racism works in Australia today to economically exploit people?

(Townsend 1989, 50)

Such resources will also encourage critical analysis of Australian society and the roles and responsibilities of systems and groups within that society.


?
How many resources can you name which are in danger of becoming over-used or which are in short supply in Australia, or in other parts of the world? (e.g. water, wood, food, fish, oil)
Can you think of any ways that Australians try to conserve resources? Are there ways we should but aren't? Should we lead simpler, less consuming lifestyles?
Take a look at this chart
THE DEVELOPING WORLD HAS....
75% of the world's people
17% of the world's GNP
30% of the world's food grains
11% of the world's education spending
6% of the world's health expenditure
15% of the world's energy consumption
18% of the world's export earnings
8% of the world's industry
5% of the world's science and technology
Why do the industrialised countries consume so much when their population is so much less than the developing world?
What is of greater concern — the growth in population where people do not use very much or the increasing consumption by people who already use a lot?

(Townsend 1989, 132)

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In addition, inclusive resources reflect the values and interests of a variety of social and cultural groups and reflect an understanding of the impact of idiom on non–English-speaking-background learners and learners who are not part of the cultural subgroups reflected in idiomatic language.

There are implications for teachers' classroom practice as a result of these inclusive characteristics. Teachers will need to select resources appropriate to the aims and purposes of the class and take client group characteristics into account when doing this.

In making choices about content, format, and underlying ideology of resources, teachers must approach the task critically and balance 'good' practice and inclusive practice needs. In inclusive provision, teachers will also select resources in conjunction with students with particular attention to processes of group dynamics and curriculum negotiation.

Often teachers have to develop their own resources because the range of published material appropriate to adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning is either limited, or simply not appropriate. In such cases, opportunities exist to develop materials that demonstrate the principles we have been exploring.

Further texts, in the form of articles from newspapers, forms, or letters, are frequently brought in by students. These texts often have great personal relevance to the student's experience of life and are therefore extremely useful. They too are a vehicle for critical interrogation.

Many existing resources reflect superficial understandings of cultural difference and social groups. A skilled educator will use these resources to explore the cultural assumptions, beliefs, and values embedded in them. Careful questioning can help the class lay bare what has been foregrounded in the text, what is absent, and which voices have been suppressed or marginalised.

In many instances, resources such as newspapers offer clear and relevant examples of bias that can be unpacked and exploited for analysis and critical discussion. From such analysis, feedback can be generated and forwarded to publishers and other producers of resources. Examples of published resources that may be relevant or of interest are annotated in the next chapter of this document.

Finally, resources for classroom use include those resources used in assessing learners' achievements throughout the course. As we have suggested in the assessment section, particular attention must be paid to the nature of resources used for assessment purposes.

Institutional practice

Quality inclusive resources will not automatically emerge from the educational process. Educational provision has been supported for many years by materials that assist teachers to develop learning activities for classroom use or in planning classroom processes. An earlier section of this document has alluded to the dearth of appropriate materials for adult literacy, language, and numeracy learners. There are also difficulties in arranging staff development activities to develop more materials because of the historical development of the field and existing employment patterns.

An issue needing further examination is the extent to which 'special' materials are required as a focus of learning. Much of the rhetoric of adult literacy, language, and numercy learning suggests that learners bring their own materials to use as the basis of program planning. Experienced teachers know, however, that it can be exhausting to respond to the everchanging needs of learners and to develop activities that offer enough practice on a regular basis for learners to sustain literacy, language, and numeracy skills.

If systems intend to extend further the possibilities of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning to encompass inclusive practices, program management will need to create professional development opportunities that enable teachers and librarians to select resources that examine ideas, beliefs, and practices embedded in text and that are representative of different positions and perspectives.

In addition, professional development opportunities are essential to enable teachers to be involved in writing resources that critically challenge dominant discourse about social groups or conventional literacy practices and examine the assumptions inherent in making particular resource selections. Professional development might also be based on research projects aimed specifically at generating resources that challenge prevailing norms, such as, for example, Bee (1989) on women, or McCormack (1992) on work perspectives. Recent resource research and development has provided examples of how to extend teachers' understandings of classroom practice, such as, for example, Ennis et al (1988) on working with groups, and McCormack and Pancini (1992) on developing learners' understanding of the learning and teaching process.

Resource development is of little value unless teachers are given opportunities to examine how resources are used in practice and identify outcomes arising from the use of these resources. Throughout this document, we have continually noted the dangers in predetermining social interaction within and between social groups. In inclusive institutions,

resource development will go hand-in-hand with trialling and the necessary professional development to extend classroom uses of the resource to meet the changing needs of learning contexts.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The current political and economic climate of Australian industry has highlighted the importance of training and development in achieving organisational goals. This situation is no different for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. Within these organisations, educators are clearly expected to be skilled communicators, up-to-date in their understanding of teaching and learning processes, and knowledgeable about the organisation's purpose, management practices, and decision-making procedures. Most educators need this knowledge and skill to operate effectively anyway, but the preceding discussion has illuminated how other personnel interact with and influence adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning experiences. While existing good management practice supports administrative and clerical staff to be aware of learners' needs, educators and other employees have a number of other training needs that are currently not being addressed.

To teach inclusive curricula, teachers need to recognise that within adult literacy classes there will be inequities of provision, of relevant and appropriate resources, and of their ability and willingness to confront their own role in unwittingly perpetuating these inequities.

Robinson and Mageean (no date) note the following as times at which TAFE teachers in particular are motivated to take on new learning:

- **induction**
- **initial instruction skills training**
- **mid-career changes in teachers' roles**
- **possible promotion to the advanced skills teacher classification.**

These significant times within an educator's career would seem to be a useful starting point for increasing awareness of the additional issues raised in this project that identify and separate inclusive curriculum practice from 'good' practice.

Villegas (1991) notes and that teachers operate in 'complex and dynamic' classrooms and there are particular challenges facing the teacher in the multicultural classroom. We have reiterated that this 'multiculturalism' is not confined to the language and habits commonly associated with people from 'other' countries. Classroom 'culture' will be

influenced by gender, class, and a range of other social group affiliations. **Successful teachers within this socially inclusive classroom will need to have:**

- **an attitude of respect for cultural differences**
- **procedures for getting to know the cultural resources of their students**
- **the ability to translate this knowledge into effective instruction**
- **skills in interactive decision-making (Villegas 1991, 9).**
- **knowledge of the sociolinguistic norms of different groups.**

Identification of professional development needs and outcomes is one part of the solution. One needs to ask also what kind of experiences within the professional development program will be most effective in serving an education for social justice.

We believe that professional development programs for education for social justice will do these things:

- **engage teachers with the critical issues shaping their practice**
- **provide action research opportunities whereby theoretical understandings inform teachers' classroom practice and they have the opportunity to act on these understandings and transform them into effective teaching and learning strategies**
- **establish teachers as learners in the same way as socially critical adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs do with their own learners**
- **engender a climate of reflective teaching that allows teachers to examine their own practice without fear of sanction**
- **acknowledge the constraints operating on teachers, who are already stretched beyond capacity in a field that is rapidly developing a top-down management structure.**

The constraints on teachers mentioned in the last point are increasingly divorcing institutional procedures for examining values, identifying purposes, and prioritising goals (curriculum development) from the procedures whereby learning occurs to achieve those goals (curriculum implementation). In the process, many teachers are becoming deskilled.

Institutions are able to play a significant role in redressing this imbalance in curriculum conception and practice, but as we have suggested earlier, significant shifts are required in current thinking about whose knowledge is valued and the level and manner of resourcing required to implement such an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision.

Previous sections of this document have highlighted the importance of an inclusive institution's decision-making procedures. The training and development expectations that an organisation establishes as part of its overall inservice and preservice policies will also influence the effectiveness of an adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum for social justice.

The training needs of educators, managers, bureaucrats, and support staff are seen as central to inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy practice for social justice within a model of provision that acknowledges that curriculum encompasses all the activities that influence student learning and that all employees of the institution need to recognise the significance of their values and attitudes in relation to successful adult literacy, language, and numeracy participation. Furthermore, an equal opportunity organisation presumably expects all employees to have equitable access to participation within the organisation, so it has a responsibility to provide training for employees to ensure that discriminatory practices that constrain learning outcomes are prevented rather than controlled through the use of sanctions and compliance procedures.

Similar themes to those of teacher development will be replayed in the wider training and development environment of the institution. A common need for all employees is their ability to participate in critical debate within the institution's decision-making process. **Training programs for work in a socially just institution will be aimed at:**

- **improving employees' ability to participate in decision-making processes**
- **informing and supporting their commitment to the equal opportunity principles outlined in organisational employment conditions**
- **informing employees of inclusive practices**
- **increasing awareness of sanctions against behaviours that contravene inclusive practices for social justice**
- **teaching people how to operate on committees where they represent their own opinions or alternatively where they are elected as channels to reflect the voices of particular social groups**

- **offering cultural awareness programs and experiential training in interacting with colleagues**
- **teaching employees how to introduce ideas positioned outside the prevailing discourse.**

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy systems intent on making realistic claims for social justice and the inclusive curriculum necessary to achieve this will need to examine how to increase provision of, and commitment to, professional development in a field that has serious pay and promotion inequities, and, as has already been pointed out, is staffed by a group of people undergoing rapid change to employment expectations.

Throughout this project, many people referred to the teacher as though she or he was the curriculum. While the teacher is clearly an important part of the classroom process, literacy, language, and numeracy learning involves much more than classroom interaction. Effective programs for social justice will need to acknowledge this and address training and development accordingly.

SUMMARY

We have attempted in this chapter to acknowledge the already existing good practice in adult literacy, language, and numeracy education. This field has been exemplary in its intentions, and some of its achievements and inclusive practice rest on the best of established procedures. We have looked at how established procedures can be built on in classrooms and institutions to establish inclusive practice, which aims to interrogate relations of power that perpetuate conditions of domination.

The areas we have selected to focus on are not exhaustive and they certainly overlap with each other. Assessment and content, for example, interplay with each other in important ways. Evaluation is not examined as a separate issue because we did not want to fall into the trap of seeing it as an end-point procedure. Rather, we have framed it as an ongoing curriculum planning issue.

Much is open to debate in the guidance we have offered. We expect that it will raise new issues and be challenged by others who will be able to bring to this field's attention voices and issues we have missed. We have intended to offer an example of a process that will be refined and expanded by new thinking and new ideas, rather than a superficial product that offers false or naive hopes for educational change.

The next chapter offers models for critically analysing resources and ways of using these resources in the classroom. We do not attempt to give a

catalogue of resources but offer examples of the process educators could use when they select resources. This process can assist them also in deciding how they might exploit resources that are available.

CHAPTER 4: USING RESOURCES INCLUSIVELY, USING INCLUSIVE RESOURCES

We include this chapter to make explicit strategies and guidance for the production, choice, and use of resources for inclusive practices in classrooms and in institutions. In it, we outline the factors that we recommend students, teachers, librarians, managers, and others consider when they are deciding what to select and how to use it.

We have three purposes:

- to alert teachers to the ways in which the resources may enable or constrain inclusive practices
- to direct systems to look critically at the resources they produce for learning; the nature of these resources is a reflection of the degree to which systems and institutions actually support teachers to implement the policies they advocate
- to direct managers of adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs to examine resources that guide inclusive practice at the systemic level.

Implicit in our first purpose is our belief that the methodology or approach of the teacher is critical in exploiting the possibilities offered by any text. We suggest that a critical review of any resource in terms of inclusivity will consider the following:

- audience and purpose—for whom is it meant and in what circumstances? is it explicit about its aims and purposes? how does it position the reader?
- subject—to whom would this topic appeal? from what persective has it been approached? who is represented in the text and how?
- presentation, including illustrations, layout, typeface, structure and format—is it appealing? easy to use? for whom? who might find it difficult?
- language—how difficult is it? is it sexist? racist? homophobic? idiomatic?

We suggest ways of looking at texts with a view to making explicit some of the cultural assumptions, beliefs, and values that are necessarily part

of their construction. Some of the criteria from chapter three in the resource section are also considered, but not comprehensively. Instead of our attempting to set up a single model for resource selection and use, our aim is to provide representative illustrations of the ways resources can be used critically for inclusive purposes.

Implicit in our second purpose in our belief that reviewing resources provides teachers with a way of feeding into systemic processes. Teachers have an important role in informing those who manage resource provision, creation, and dissemination within the system of problems inherent in resources. Their role as advocates for change in resources to reflect social difference in a positive fashion requires recognition and support in an inclusive system. Through their critical use of resources for inclusivity, teachers can advise how change could be effectively implemented to promote education for social justice.

Implicit in our third purpose is our belief, reiterated throughout the document, that systemic change is crucial for developing an inclusive curriculum. Managers need to be aware of the same facets inherent in the resources they produce, supply, or sanction to which we have directed teachers in order that they can guide inclusively the internal and public faces of the education system. Guidelines exist to assist managers to do this. These guidelines tend to address certain audiences and topics:

- general use of inclusive language
- general policy
- specific social groups—such as Aborigines, women, people with disabilities
- requirements in specific organisations.

But managers need to apply the same critical approach to these guidelines as to the resources and documents that they produce.

ANNOTATED RESOURCES

We have attempted in this selection to review a small number of resources that are representative of materials used in adult literacy classes and that cover a range of topics and approaches for different audiences. We accept that many teachers are selective with what they use and will often use only small sections of a resource.

In many cases, non-inclusive resources are used to great advantage by teachers. Whatever resource is selected, it is the methodology and approach of the teacher that is critical. With this in mind, we have also reviewed a popular magazine to highlight how the limitations, interest level, and appeal of such publications might be exploited.

Townsend, Kathleen. (1989). *Issues on Australia's doorstep.* Perth: One World Centre.

The source of much of the information in this text is a set of books called *Teaching development issues,* which was published by the Manchester Development Education Project in Britain. The content has been updated and 'Australianised'. Although the book is not geared specifically to an adult audience, we think that the approach, layout, and content make it eminently suitable for use with adult learners.

Chapters in the book cover colonialism, food, health, population, work, aid, and development. The main focus is on Australia's relations with its neighbours, especially those countries classed as 'Third World'.

The author's bias is stated explicitly:

> Issues are often analysed from the perspective of the poor and disadvantaged groups, especially women.
> Concern for the environment and for development which is sustainable, also permeates the text (5).

Layout is appealing and non-threatening with blocks of print broken up regularly with large headings, many small sections, photographs, diagrams, charts, maps, boxed information, newspaper clippings, detailed drawings, comic strips, and cartoons. Icons appear on every page that flag key ideas and particular activities, such as group work, discussion questions, note-taking, individual research, surveys, library work, role-playing, debate, and simulation.

This range of learning strategies indicates the way in which the learner is invited to engage actively with the content: 'to stimulate readers to discover what they already know and to explore issues and ideas that may be new to them' (5). Indeed, the reader is explicitly positioned as 'participant' rather than 'reader' (5).

True to these claims, the text challenges readers' perceptions of poverty, responsibility, development, and economic growth. The voices of women the world over, Aborigines, and other indigenous peoples are heard without special pleading. Information is presented unemotively but challengingly, and in a form that makes it accessible and readable by people whose command of English is limited.

This is a highly recommended text, exemplary in relation to the principles of this project.

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Bee, Barbara. (1989). *Women and work: literacy resources.* [Sydney]: NSW Department of TAFE.

Aims, underlying assumptions, and organisations are clearly and explicitly stated at the beginning of the text:

> The aim of this literacy unit is to raise those issues that are crucial to women's education and employment opportunities . . . The hope is that these resources will act as a catalyst for thinking, talking, reading and writing about women's work and women's experiences at both a functional and ideological level (iii).

The kit is in a black ring-binder and divided into units of work that lead the learner through discussions of what is considered work, to finding a job, experience in the workplace, and changing technology. The units are largely dependent upon teacher guidance, and the instructions are such that it would be difficult for individuals to use alone.

A strength of the kit is its acknowledgement of different learning styles and its consequent flexibility, which allows 'for pair and small group work that is non-competitive and co-operative' (iv). One of the convictions underlying this is that learning does not 'flourish in a climate of educational and political silence' (iv).

The teaching strategies suggested are designed to dispel the idea that some students have, especially those from non–English-speaking backgrounds, that the teacher is the source of all knowledge.

The learning approach is activity-based to encourage students to engage personally as much as possible with content and ideas and to value their own knowledge and skills. Whenever possible, students are directed to draw on their own life experiences.

The focus is on women, so facets of oppression other than sexism and racism, such as disability and sexuality, have been noted only in passing. The voices of Aboriginal women are heard, albeit briefly, in section four, 'Whose story?'

The language is gender-inclusive and the pictures inclusive of ethnic origin, gender, and age. The teacher is directed to further references and resources at the end of the kit.

We think that this is a valuable and highly recommended resource.

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McCormack, Rob. (1992). *The world of work: a reader for adult basic education.* Canberra: Department of Employment, Education, and Training.

The audience and subject of the book are defined as follows:

> These materials have been written for adults who are not confident readers or writers. Although I have tried to keep the wording simple, the ideas themselves are sophisticated.
>
> The main theme of the book is that the way we produce and distribute goods affects the rest of our lives (ii).

This is not stated, however, in the front of the book. The reader must search for this information, because it is tucked away in notes for the teacher at the back of the text.

Initially the reader is positioned as that of a sympathetic listener, as a first person narrator talks about his life and current money concerns. The style is engaging and very personal. The narrator emerges as a white Australian male whose childhood was spent on an Australian country farm.

As the book progresses, the tone and genre of the writing changes: other voices are heard and other perspectives are presented. The voice of the employee is definitely favoured over that of the employer. As the text moves through narrative to expository and persuasive writing, so the position of the reader changes from that of sympathetic listener to that of being actively engaged in debating the issues of industrialised society. She or he remains, however, positioned as the worker.

The format is carefully designed, with wide margins, and headings, and the text is broken occasionally with black-and-white line drawings and boxed text. Overall, the text could still be off-putting for developing readers.

We believe a major drawback is the lack of introduction, detailed contents, and index. This lack makes it confusing for anyone to use, including teachers. The information and guidance given are sketchy and difficult to locate. Literacy students might find it especially difficult. We also think an explicit declaration of intent and point of view at the beginning is essential.

While every effort is made to acknowledge a variety of perspectives, the reader nevertheless is asked to position

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herself or himself specifically with the white, middle class, male perspective. This need not be a problem if there are sufficient other texts produced by the department and other publishing bodies that allow other voices to be heard.

The language attempts to be nonsexist, and in the world of work, women's contributions have been recognised as have those of migrants and Aborigines, although the lack of index makes it difficult to locate these references. Sentences are short, and difficult words and concepts are boxes and explained. A glossary of idioms that have been identified by a Vietnamese student as a possible cause of problems is included and has been appended. Such addenda are useful reminders of aspects of English that can cause difficulties for some readers.

Overall, we think that this is a text that makes a positive effort to be inclusive and very largely succeeds. It is a valuable contribution to the field.

Wajnryb, Ruth. (1991). *Other voices: a cross-cultural communication workbook.* South Melbourne: Nelson.

The 'other voices' in this text are almost exclusively Asian, but this does not detract from its usefulness as a resource for all cultural groups in Australia. It is a workbook, based on case studies and aimed at middle-level to upper-level English-as-a-second-language learners. The philosophy underpinning it is that 'issues of a cross-cultural nature inevitably affect the process and success of language learning. They are therefore best approached deliberately and systematically' (5).

The author is explicit about her beliefs and approach and addresses the student directly in the introduction. Her tone is the same as that with which she addresses the teacher in the next section. There is no hint that because the student may be struggling with the language she/he will be struggling with the ideas.

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The book's focus is clearly stated:

> This book is about the cultural side of language learning. Through a focus on areas of culture you will become more aware of your own culture and through this, aware of the culture of English-speaking people. You will find out areas of commonality, and points of difference too (2).

The exercises and questions that follow each case study, although they often deal with sensitive issues such as decisions to part with babies, are not presented in such a way as to suggest one value is 'better' or more acceptable than another. The point is to open the issues for exploration, and to show that there *are* differences, and that different cultural groups will have different persectives: '[a]s people become increasingly aware of themselves as cultural beings, they become more receptive to the idea of cultural diversity' (4).

There are ten stories in the book, each told as a personal narrative describing different facets of cultural clash, acculturation, and bias. Each one is fascinating in its own right, and is accompanied by a full-page, black-and-white portrait of the subject. The accompanying suggestions for work confront the issues raised. It is these contexts of issues that really matter, that language is explored to include idioms, proverbs, puns, inuendo, and other facets of English that make literal translation so inadequate.

As the author admits, this is not a text for beginners of English. With skilled intervention and guidance from a teacher, however, some of the material could be adapted and used. Wajnryb herself offers a few suggestions as to how this could be done, and others could be devised. We believe that it would reward the effort, because we think that the approach that the text takes is sound with regard to language learning in an inclusive context.

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Marr, Beth, & Helme, Sue. (Eds). (1987). *Mathematics: a new beginning. A resource book for teachers of adults returning to study.* Unpublished resource developed by the Teaching Maths to Women Project, State Training Board of Victoria.

The kit is a collection of loose-leaf material for teaching basic and essential mathematical concepts. In particular, it is an attempt to provide an approach to maths that is relevant to the lives, needs, and interests of adults, particularly women. The authors state their belief clearly in the introduction that the criteria that they have developed to teach the mathematical concepts involved apply to the teaching of maths to anyone—young, old, male, female—but particularly adult women returning to study.

The teaching methodology employed explicitly claims to begin structuring students' learning with reference to their own experience, working cooperatively, providing context–historical and social–raising awareness of the social and economic structures influencing our lives, and significantly acknowledging differences between students in their experiences and levels of mathematical skills.

These aims are largely met, athough on a superficial reading we note there is little acknowledgement of Australia as a multicultural society. Names are exclusively Anglo, and activities used as examples for problems suggest a fairly comfortable, white, middle class, urban lifestyle:

> The area of Australia is 7,682,000 square kilometres. The area of the United Kingdom in 244,000 square kilometres. How many times greater is Australia than the United Kingdom? (worksheet 7 EC 17)
>
> Jill owns a block of flats and receives $23,712 per year rent (worksheet 6 EC 13)
>
> Maureen bought a coat for $125.99, a dress for $65.99 and a belt for $12.50 (worksheet 6 EC 13)
>
> Robert is doing his Christmas shopping and buys the following gifts:
>
> > A 'Lego-technics' set for his older daughter, $89.99
> > A toy computer for his younger daughter at $39.89
> > Trivial Pursuit for his son at $45.99
> > Records for each of his nieces at $13.98 each
> > Book vouchers for his nephews at $15 each (worksheet 9 EC 37)

Goddard, Ruth, Marr, Beth, & Martin, Judith. (1991). *Strength in numbers : a resource book for teaching.* Melbourne: Holmesglen College of TAFE.

This is a companion volume to *Mathematics: a new beginning*, but it is designed for a more basic level. The approach is similar to its companion: '[w]hat we recommend depends upon students discussing, sharing, talking and working co-operatively together—all of which is more likely to happen in a group' (viii).

Unlike its companion, there are no specific references to the needs and interests of women. These are basic mathematical materials that reflect the needs and interests of adult students. The volume uses language suitable for students with low levels of literacy skills. The authors have developed materials that they clearly believe to be suitable for anyone from English-speaking backgrounds or non–English-speaking-backgrounds and regardless of age and gender.

There are 'hands-on' activities as with the companion resource, and the focus is on teaching concepts in a context relevant to adults and the 'real' world.

Although there is an acknowledgement of women's interests, activities, and ideas in these 'hands-on' activities and examples that goes well beyond the usual, the perspective is still largely white, middle class, and Anglo.

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Tristram, Ingrid, & Kebby, Helen. (1990). *Fresh start* (video tapes, workbook, and audio tape). np: Australian Broadcasting Commission.

The video tape is of a television drama production in 12 episodes, which focuses on a group of students in an adult literacy class. Produced by the Australian Broadcasting Commission for International Literacy Year, the series is entertaining, the characters are varied and interesting, and the viewer is able to accept that this is a 'slice of life' a bit more representative of life than most soap operas or 'realistic' dramas. The implicit messages of the program are that people with literacy problems come from all walks of life and circumstances, they all have different backgrounds and reasons for their attendance at a literacy class, that such classes are not at all like the often very unpleasant and unsuccessful classes they experienced at school, and, that in many cases teachers are as human and as frail as their students

The cultural diversity of the class is accepted and enjoyed within the context of the classroom, even if it is not explicitly confronted and examined. Nevertheless, the material and the opportunities are there for teachers to explore with their classes some of the issues that the class in the drama confront. An attempt is made in the series to acknowledge the complexity of people's lives and their problems, and not to hint at easy answers. There is a cross-section of the community represented in the class, including an older English-as-a-second-language woman, a young man of Greek background, a prisoner, and a white Australian woman. One could point out the absence of Southeast Asian, and black students, or those with a disability, not for token purposes, but to highlight the choice of cultural diversity selected for representation, which could be examined critically as an exercise by teachers with their own classes.

The accompanying workbook is well presented. Large print, colour photographs, and clever design make it attractive and easy to follow. The activities through which the student is led are well chosen and appropriate for many everyday activities in which most people would have to engage. They are basic, but the reader is not patronised.

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Far from the resource's being male-biased, to judge from the activities, captions, and photographs, one could be forgiven for thinking that 90% of all the people in Australia with literacy problems are female! There is a supporting tape that contributes to making it possible for the workbook to be used independently by students whose first language is English. For most English-as-a-second-language students, the speaker talks much too fast.

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***Streetwize comics*. Redfern, NSW: Redfern Legal Centre.**

Published quarterly, these slim comic-format publications are aimed at young people in trouble—at home, at school, at work, or on the streets. This information is not explicitly stated but is not hard to surmise. The short two-three–page stories with black-and-white illustrations are all about young people who get kicked out of home, or lose their jobs, or are in some other crisis. The cartoon characters are not particularly appealing. It is unlikely that anybody would ever read these comics purely for entertainment. The stories are very short, shallow, and to the point.

Having said this, we think that they undoubtedly perform a useful purpose. They provide vital information about where to go for help, support services, crisis centres, and which government agencies are available for different kinds of assistance. Addresses and contacts are given for all States. The strength of the *Streetwize* approach is that this information is couched within the context of stories and situations with which many young people may be able to identify.

The tone of the information given is supportive and non-judgmental. There is no sense that the reader is being talked down to or made to feel guilty for her/his potential identification with issues. Young people are told what their rights are and are encouraged to stand up for them and persist if they feel they are not being treated justly.

All cultural groups are represented in the various characters that appear in the strips, and in non-stereotypical roles. The language is very idiomatic, which may make it difficult for English-as-a-second-language readers. On the other hand, the comics could for that very reason be a useful resource in any literacy class for English-as-a-second-language students to learn about the idiomatic English of the streets, as well as about the various suppport agencies that exist to help them. The situations depicted in the comics would also provide plenty of scope for discussion for all students about a side of Australian society not usually presented in such an accessible manner.

Martin, John. (1986). *PALS (Principle of the Alphabet Literacy System)* (computer program). New York: IBM.

This computer program has been developed in the United States principally for adults with reading and writing difficulties. It uses colour graphics, recorded voice-over, and three fairly discrete sections or 'phases' of work for students to work through over a period of approximately 20 weeks. The first phase, which can take up to five or more weeks, is based on a story that students follow through by listening, typing, and writing. The second and third phases comprise work journals and personal writing practicing using the touch-typing skills that they have been developing in the first section. A guide to suppport teachers using the program is set out in a loose-leaf ring-binder.

We suspect that for many students the program succeeds or fails in relation to two aspects: the long story on which activities are based, and the commitment of the teacher to the program. The notes claim that although it is designed for English-speaking adults, the program is suitable for English-as-a-second-language students and for adolescents. The comic format of the story, the characters ('Wise King Alfa', 'Brave Queen Bet' and 'Evil Duke Harman'), the story line, and the tone all suggest that the program has been targeted at younger adolescents, and especially boys. The main characters are 'heroes' of a sort that appear commonly in American media productions. Although there is an explicit attempt to have equal numbers of males and females, this is only true of the 'kids'. 'Brave Queen Bet' is the only significant woman in the warring world of men. There is also an explicit attempt to have the characters representative of various cultural groups, but the differences are superficial and stereotypical. The commendable 'inclusive' aims stated in the teachers' guide have not been integrated into the total concept.

Teacher guidance in the orientation of students to the program is critical, and also, we suspect, important in keeping students going through the very long and (to us) tedious story of the invention of the alphabet. The user of *PALS* has some control over the pace, but this control is limited due to the medium, particularly in the first phase, and she or he is very much at the mercy of the computer.

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Overall, we thought that the tone of the story and related activities condescends to intelligent adults, although the teachers we spoke to said that in their experience only one student had not liked it. In particular, we found the concept of a group of children having an adventure and inventing the alphabet because the adults kept getting into trouble with their picture messages patronising.

Since it is an American program, the voices have American accents, which could cause some problems because the approach to spelling, on which the exercises are based, is phonetic. A particularly popular feature of *PALS* is the phonetic alphabet that students can call up to practice their mastery of some of the basic sounds in English.

Osmond, Pam. (1984).*'So you want to teach an adult to read?'A handbook for tutors.* Melbourne: Edward Carroll.

We chose this resource to review because we suspect it may be typical of many slightly older texts that are commonly available and used in adult literacy classes. It undoubtedly has some useful information in it, as is suggested by the three-star rating given to it in *The resources book for new workers in adult literacy*, edited by Jane Cameron, published by ALBE Resources Unit, 1992. Indeed, much of the approach to learning and the advice given appear to be based on sound educational theory.

We think it is important to be alert, however, to some of the limitations of such texts and for teachers to use them selectively, and with care. Teachers may need to modify some of the activities that are suggested so that content and methodology become more culturally aware and challenging.

The most obvious flaw in this text and others similar to it that are older publications is the use of 'he' throughout:

> The best way for your student to improve his spelling is to write often. His progress will be very slow if he only writes once or twice a week when he is with you. He needs to write every day' (37).

In their use of this text as a resource, we would encourage teachers to modify acticities by revising language to be more inclusive or to use the non-inclusive language as the basis for critical practice.

There are two brief case studies, one of 'Michael', a 35-year-old proprietor, and one of 'Joy', a 28-year-old 'home duties' person. Both are Anglo-Australians. There are no representatives of other social groups mentioned. The overwhelming number of examples relate to 'Michael', and even when 'Michael' is not referred to, because 'he' is used throughout, the examples are most often male-orientated. For example: '[i]f the student knows all about breeding dogs or fixing cars or trail bike riding, write it down for him' (27). We suggest that teachers review resources such as these, and when they use any of the suggestions or strategies in the text, they take steps to counter some of the heavy biases that we have identified.

We also suggest that teachers go further in using some of the activities suggested in relation to magazines and newpaper articles to encourage students to engage with and challenge the content of the texts, not just 'learn' them. For example, the author uses a short (romantic) story, 'Finders keepers', from a magazine to illustrate how predicting is a useful reading strategy (35). As well as the exercise of predicting who Carol (and the reader) thinks is going to take her boyfriend away from her, the teacher could go further to discuss gender stereotyping, disrupting the text, and parodying the genre (see O'Neill 1989 for examples).

On page 53 there are suggestions for using the newspaper: '[h]ave a word hunt. Give your student one or a list of words to find in a section of the newspaper'. We suggest that the teacher could make this a more challenging and purposeful activity by choosing the words carefully, and then seeing *who* says them, and *to whom*: male or female? young or old? what kind of ethnic background? about what?

On page 54 there is a suggestion to cut out several pictures from a newpaper or magazine and cut off the captions: '[r]ead the captions to your student and ask him to match the appropriate picture to caption'. Again we suggest the teacher actually analyses the pictures. Who is in them? Who is not?

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Who is going to be interested? Why? Students could make up alternative captions that foreground the absences of particular kinds of people and their interests and needs. Students could be asked to find headlines and pictures that can be used like this because they either are or are not inclusive, biased, or stereotypical. In such ways, exercises in texts like these can be extended for inclusive practice.

***New Idea* November 14, 1992.**

The magazine does not have an editorial, and there are no explicit aims, purposes, or audience stated anywhere in the text. The cover has photographs of various celebrities from the United States, Britain, and Australia. Contents cover fashion and beauty, fiction, contests, cooking, craft, 'in the news', special features, and 'let's talk'.

A glance through the pages reveals the almost exclusive dominance of young and middle-aged, white, middle class, Anglo-American women and men. The only exceptions are Sophia Loren, Audrey Hepburn with some Somalian children, and a 'World Vision' advertisement featuring a Zambian child, Nonda.

The focus of most of the pictures and articles is fashion, food, beauty aids, and health, where the reader is positioned as that of uncritical consumer. Many of the pictures and articles are about 'stars', television personalities, and royalty.

If one examines the text with the question 'who is missing?', one could identify by their absence (amongst others), Aborigines, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, the poor, and the aged.

It is not always productive, however, to focus entirely on absences and gaps. Magazines such as this one have appeal in spite of their limitations, and we believe it is helpful to look for their strengths as well as identifying with students their gaps and cultural assumptions. It is possible to find articles and

stories that can be used for discussion, learning, and positive critical examination. For example, in this issue, there are two short pieces on the efforts of two people to save kingfishers and the flying fox.

Sickness, the other facet of the ethos of good health to which the magazine is committed, is acknowledged, and there is readable personal account of a woman's experience of breast cancer. A careful search also uncovers a short piece on 'Big brothers/Big sisters', a volunteer organisation to support young children who are in trouble.

Stories such as that about Neddy Smith, 'Missing millions, murder, robberies and corrupt cops—Neddy Smith's wife tells all', and 'Outrage! Australia's most wanted man' offer possibilities for analysis in terms of how they position the reader (either as sympathiser or as a morally outraged citizen/mother), the point of view from which the story is told, whose voice is not heard, what is 'fact' and what is opinion, and so on.

Resources such as these are especially dependent upon the teaching methodology that is used in conjuction with them.

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ANNOTATED GUIDELINES

We have critically examined a general policy set of guidelines in chapter two: *Overcoming distance: isolated rural women's access to TAFE across Australia* (Mageean 1988). The types of guidelines annotated in this section include guidelines on inclusive language (Barker 1987; Pauwels 1991), guidelines on addressing needs of particular social groups (*A fair go for all* 1990; McJames 1991), and guidelines for a particular institution (Van Dyke 1991).

These are examples only of the kinds of resources that are available. They need to be used critically: it must be reiterated that many guidelines foreground one particular form of social difference, and this obscures the complexity of how differences intersect.

Barker, Kerin. (1987). *Inclusive language guidelines for Deakin University.* Geelong: Deakin University Press.

This small booklet of 40 pages is an excellent short handbook for writers seeking alternatives for sexist language. The introduction is brief and does not attempt to explore in any depth the philosophical and cultural assumptions about language that make it such a powerful tool for perpetuating inequality. (For such discussion, the reader could refer to Dale Spender's *Man made language* or Cate Poynton's *Making the difference*—see the bibliography). The text provides alternatives for gender-specific terms that are often used as generic words like 'man', 'chairman', 'workman', 'postman', 'cameraman'. The author cites examples where writers have avoided such usage in the past, and also provides recommendations for how to address people, how to avoid stereotyped descriptions and diminutive terminology, such as suffixes like 'ette' and 'ess', and how to recognise terms that imply inferiority such as 'maiden'. There is also a chapter on guidelines for referring to minority groups to assist the reader in the appropriate uses of terms like 'Aboriginal', 'aborigines', 'Aborigines', 'ethnic', 'disability', and 'handicapped' among others.

Three appendices offer further references, a discussion on the use of 'he' as a generic pronoun, and a glossary with alternatives to non-inclusive terms.

The discussion of the importance of the issues is brief, and much is assumed with regard to the justification of inclusivity. There is sufficient, however, to convince most sympathetic readers of the need for attention to the language we use. Examples are used constantly to highlight this:

> Gender should not be relevant to a job . . . Job titles which do not specify sex are more comprehensive, more accurate, and more consistent.
> e.g. if a woman is 'Australia's top craftswoman' is she the best of only the women, or the best artisan of all? (13).

This is a neat and handy reference, which is practical, sensible, and readily available.

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Pauwels, Anne. (1991). *Non-discriminatory language.* Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service.

A more recent and more comprehensive text than Barker's, which covers much the same material, is *Non-discriminatory language*. It is written in clear straight-forward prose, and it provides useful discussion with examples of why particular words and expressions are problematic, and in which contexts. The author includes an excellent introduction to each section, with justification as to why particular kinds of language are objectionable. All this is presented in a reasonable tone that underlines the logic of the arguments. For example:

> In many contexts it is quite unnecessary to mention a person's sex, race, ethnic background or another characteristic. Yet for members of minority groups . . . these characteristics are often mentioned to the exclusion of other information which would have been more relevant in the context . . . This kind of gratuitous specification . . . is particularly obvious in news headlines . . . GREEK MAN KICKED TO DEATH(5).

Pauwels also discusses briefly the way in which the embeddedness of discrimination in language goes beyond mere choice of words but is evident in syntax, grammar, the organisation of text, and other linguistic practices.

There are particularly useful sections relating to the fair representation of indigenous and immigrant minorities in Australia and for writers who have to produce guidelines for the use of non-discriminatory language for institutions and organisations. There is an excellent index, which should facilitate the text's wide use. This volume is attractively produced and easy to read.

***A fair go for all: guidelines for a gender-inclusive curriculum.* (1990). Victoria: Office of Schools Administration, Ministry of Education.**

These guidelines address themselves to all educational policy-makers and practitioners with the explicit intention that:

> the introduction of a gender-inclusive curriculum will enhance the education of both girls and boys by broadening the base of understanding and knowledge currently presented in our schools and raising the status of, and opportunities for, women and girls in our society. In the long term, the presentation of a set of values which includes the feminine as well as the masculine will lead to a more humane and balanced society (7).

Although directed towards a general education system audience, we believe that the guidelines provide useful advice for practitioners and managers within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy education system.

If the writers of this document faced the same or similar difficulties that we have in trying to arrive at definitions of 'inclusive' and 'curriculum', they have not chosen to present them. They define a gender-inclusive curriculum unproblematically as one that 'by its content, language and methods gives value and validity to girls and women, their knowledge and experience, equally with boys' and mens' knowledge and experience' (7). Our problem with this approach is that it in no way challenges social structures and assumptions beyond advocating that women's roles are valued as much as men's. Issues of social justice are not addressed.

The writers have considered the various levels of responsibility that need to be involved to effect the necessary changes they see as relevant to the purposes they state, and they provide brief summaries of the kind of action that needs to be taken at these levels. The two main sections of the text are as follows:

- reasons and resources, which include discussion of language, content, learning and teaching, assessment and reporting, and school organisation
- responsibilities, which cover school communities—principals, teachers, students, and parents, regions and school support centres—and professional development guidelines.

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The text is well designed, clearly and attractively presented in short segments with many cartoons, headings, and references. Guidance is very specific with regard such matters as institutional and classroom organisation, methodology, resources, timetabling, access to facilities, reporting, curriculum content, and other aspects of the learning environment.

Van Dyke, Ruth. (1991). *Equal opportunities guidelines for course material* (Teaching and Consultancy Centre monograph no 1). Milton Keyes: Institute of Educational Technology, the Open University.

The scope of this booklet is comprehensive enough to be used in many cultural contexts, although it is produced principally for a British audience, with the Open University's students in mind. It therefore omits specific reference to Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

The author provides discussion of issues and guidance for each stage of the curriculum development process. She covers research that needs to be done, consultative activity, language, content, medium of delivery, and monitoring. Particular strengths in the guidance are the acknowledgement of diverse sexual preferences and the needs of people with disabilities.

There are some problems with the definition of marginalised groups and the rationale given for the terminology used. At times, the use of labels runs the risk not only of overlooking the specificity of the groups referred to but of actively lumping them together in a semihomogeneous mass that denies their cultural and social specificity. For example:

> 'The term 'black' is used to refer to people discriminated against on the grounds of colour, race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. However, the choice of the term 'black' is intended to focus attention on colour/racial discrimination rather than on discrimination based on culture.
> The term 'black people' encompasses a number of minority ethnic groups in Britain: Afro-Caribbeans, Africans, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Chinese (9).

We recognise that the listing of numerous groups in a litany runs the risk of 'commatisation', which lulls the reader into a

less critical position less alert to group specificity. We suggest that there are other methods for recognising different groups in the text that avoid the problems of lump labelling or 'commatisation'. One is to avoid trying to embrace all marginalised groups and address specific groups' needs in the discussion. If a wider impact is desired, another approach is to avoid labels like 'black' and use more generic labels, to specify the particular sociological aspect—ethnicity, culture, religion—pertinent to the discussion in each instance, and to use a wide range of examples using different but specific groups that illustrate the scope of the discussion.

Van Dyke suggests the possibility of using such themes as 'diversity', 'difference', 'power' and 'inequality' as:

> a framework for making disadvantaged groups visible and for discussing equal opportunities issues . . . [and] to investigate how these differences come to be valued differently; what are the social, economic and political factors that create difference *and* transform difference into inequality? (21).

She also recognises the necessity of providing a theoretical framework, and the inadequacy of using 'traditional' sociological, psychological, educational, and economic theories to do this: '[t]raditional theory on its own is not, therefore, conducive to incorporating an equal opportunities perspective in the curriculum' (23). One way in which she discusses this is to explain why some beliefs and assumptions have become so ingrained in our culture, and to advocate for a full account of the shortcomings by drawing on the criticisms made by women, black, disabled, and lesbian and gay academics and the research they have done.

Although still in draft format, this booklet promises to be a useful resource for curriculum writers and developers, managers, teachers, and writers of guidelines in Australia as well as in Britain.

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McJames, Norma. (1991). *Basic education needs of visually impaired adults.* Melbourne: Adult, Community, and Further Education Board.

One of a number of publications produced by specialist bodies to address the particular needs of people with specific disabilities, this text helps educators to understand and provide for adults with vision impairment. The publication itself demonstrates some of the advice it gives by using large bold print on white paper.

The report is the result of a research project that examined accessibility for adults with visual impairment to basic education, opportunity for participation, and basic education needs of visually impaired adults. The project was conducted in Victoria in two regions. In its recommendations, the report gives advice on broad strategies for enabling the blind or partially blind access and participation on an equitable basis in adult basic education.

This particular text contains some valuable information concerning ways in which visually impaired people may be better provided for, and some useful guidelines as to how teachers and institutions might approach this. The focus is particularly upon access and delivery. There is no discussion of theory, issues, or content of courses. The recommendations are very broad:

> the Division of Further Education [must] devise effective strategies for enabling and promoting participation of persons with visual impairment and blindness in adult basic education and allied courses on an equitable basis (59).

There follow a number of strategies for ensuring this, but they are also mostly very general, such as:

> Strategy 5: Delivery of programs
>
> - provision of programs which are sufficiently flexible in method and delivery to reasonably accommodate the requirements of visually impaired adults on an equitable basis (61).

Publications such as this one and others like it, such as *Practical guidelines for working with adult students with a vision impairment* (Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind 1992), are useful, but limited. They may be consulted for ways in which to help people with specific disabilities access classes and for ways to accommodate their needs. This information by itself, however, in no way addresses the more fundamental issues that contribute to the inequitable treatment to which people with disabilities are subject.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this document we have been at pains to emphasise the interrelatedness of issues such as inclusivity, social groups and difference, social justice and curriculum.

A driving force behind the arguments we have presented is that in the development of an inclusive curriculum there must be some kind of rationale for why providers would want to address and act on the various educational needs of learners. We propose that the driving force behind the kind of curriculum we present here is a vision of *education for social justice*, which is explicit in its attempts to change current social inequalities.

Classroom practices and individual learning needs will be shaped by the various economic, social, and cultural positions that learners occupy. We have forwarded an argument that Australian society selectively enhances opportunities for particular social groups. The aim of the type of curriculum we propose here is to give those people positioned beyond these advantaged groups a space wherein they can speak, they can be heard, and their concerns can be honoured. These characteristics are at the heart of a positive politics of difference, which informs this project. From this perspective, social differences are valued and used as the basis of coexistence rather than as the oppressive edge of a wedge that divides communities and maintains unequal relations of power.

We suggest that an inclusive curriculum for social justice will direct most of its energy to providing a learning setting in which both teachers and learners come together to explore issues critically and develop literacy, language, and numeracy skills. The aim of this curriculum is to offer learners alternative perspectives on how they might act to change their world.

It has become apparent during this project that many practitioners have very sophisticated understandings of how to support and challenge individual learners. Some practitioners are also aware of the political and historical considerations associated with learners' needs. But their work is often limited in its impact within systems for change, and it occurs in individual classrooms with teachers who have a commitment to *social justice in education*. At times, this inclusive practice has been at odds with institutional management practices and arrangements for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision that demand particular forms of

accreditation, articulation, and implementation. Many of these formal requirements constrain the ability of teachers and institutions to ensure sustainable inclusive delivery and often work against the possibilities of *education for social justice*.

It has also become apparent that any guidance for inclusive curriculum development for social justice needs to address management practices, and even more importantly, the nature of policy that permeates adult literacy, language, and numeracy institutions. Existing equal opportunity policies have been shown to make some difference to employment and educational opportunities afforded to particular social groups, for example, women and Aborigines. Existing equal opportunity policy is often founded on ideas that have an assimilative approach to difference, however, and operates through decision-making structures and processes of work coordination that obscure difference or position those as different beyond prevailing social norms.

These policies have limited impact to change practice and influence attitudes towards social justice outcomes. They have difficulty shifting organisational management and decision-making beyond the masculinist bureaucracy of many modern day organisations.

We propose that a positive view of difference needs to inform inclusive curriculum development. This requires that organisations adopt an attitude of coexistence and exchange with respect to various social groups. We have persistently stated that this coexistence will not be easy and will require major shifts in current educational thinking and management practices. This is evident in the nature of the guidance we have offered in chapter three, where we highlight the need for classroom and organisational change. We also draw attention to the significant differences between what we have labelled as good practice and inclusive practice.

The type of guidance that we suggest has three implications.

First, there needs to be a willingness on the part of all involved in provision to reconsider how relations of power shape provision. This may require that those of us in privileged positions may have to relinquish our hold on the curriculum—what we value, what we select, and, by implication, what we believe is important for learners to know.

Second, a commitment is needed within institutions to reconceptualise how policy will be informed in this new culture by a positive approach to difference. This will require managers, learners, and educators to make decisions and coordinate their work in new ways.

Third, this process will require the courage to work outside prevailing dominant discourses, since many of us in the field belong to that section

of the Australian population that is selectively advantaged. To challenge the dominant discourse means challenging our own role in perpetuating that which is oppressive and unjust in existing adult literacy, language, and numeracy practices.

These implications go beyond simplistic budgetary increases and an enhanced administrative infrastructure. While funding increases are desirable, we believe that existing patterns of distribution will only perpetuate educational inequalities and serve to advantage privileged groups further. In order to realise educational claims for social justice, funding for this field may need to be increased. More significantly, the practical implications of distribution must be reconsidered in the light of ideas about social groups and difference presented in this document.

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